

1984

YEAR-
BOOK

1984

YEARBOOK
OF
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

1984 YEARBOOK of Jehovah's Witnesses

Containing Report for the Service Year
of 1983

Also Daily Texts and Comments



Corporate Publishers

**WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
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Proclaimers of the Good News!

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES are declaring "everlasting good news," and millions are responding to the message.—Rev. 14:6.

Although people can see that world conditions are critical, they may not understand their significance. Jehovah's Witnesses are proclaiming that these events are a sign of the time of the end for this system of things and that God's day of deliverance is at hand. That is "good news"!

The Witnesses believe that since the year 1914 mankind has been living in the last days of this wicked system. Deliverance from Satan's system into Jehovah's righteous New Order under Christ's Kingdom rule will come about by eliminating the incorrigibly wicked at God's war on the battlefield of Armageddon.—Rev. 16:16.

They also believe that millions will survive Armageddon to live in the earthly Paradise of God's promise and that they will be joined by many millions more through a resurrection from the dead. Those finally approved will live forever in perfection on an earth created to last forever. That is the Kingdom good news that Jehovah's Witnesses are declaring throughout the world "for a witness to all the nations."—Matt. 24:14.

Bearers of this good news are commissioned by

Jehovah's Witnesses, in imitation of Jesus Christ, are determined to make love a dominant part of their personality, 'clothing themselves with it, for it is a perfect bond of union.'—Col. 3:14.

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Jehovah to proclaim not only "the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah" but also "the day of vengeance on the part of our God." (Isa. 61:1, 2) With reference to this time, the disciples of Jesus asked him: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matt. 24:3) Jesus listed these events as part of the sign: great wars, famine, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution of his followers, increasing lawlessness, and nations in anguish, not knowing the way out of their dilemma.—Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.

Since 1914 two world wars have killed 69 million persons. Smaller wars have added millions more to the casualty list. Famine is widespread. One billion people are now starving or are desperately undernourished. Since World War I, pestilences have swept the earth. There has also been a rapid rise in the death toll from heart failure, cancer and other degenerative diseases.

More than 1,600,000 have died in earthquakes since 1914, and during the past year further major earthquakes have struck, killing thousands more.

Moral standards are crumbling. Immorality sweeps in like a tidal wave under the euphemistic label "new morality." Adultery is viewed by many as normal, and fidelity as prudish. Family ties and social relationships deteriorate as juvenile and adult delinquency flourishes. There is crime in the ghetto, crime in suburbia, crime in the highest echelon of business and of government.

Many of these things have occurred before, but they have not all occurred together or on such a large scale as they do today. However, one feature

is unique to the time in which we live—that of "ruining the earth." (Rev. 11:18) Global pollution is ruining the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil in which our food grows. Scientists warn that if polluters do not stop, the earth will be uninhabitable before this century ends. But it is Jehovah who will stop polluters in order to save the earth for his divine purpose. This is good news indeed for the human family!

HOW THE GOOD NEWS IS PREACHED

An outstanding part of the sign of the conclusion of this system of things is the fulfillment of Jesus' command: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) Jesus foretold that such Kingdom proclaimers would be hated and persecuted in all the nations. Truly, this has been the experience of Jehovah's Witnesses!—Matt. 24:9; Luke 21:12-19.

In spite of this, the Witnesses have expanded their preaching until it is now being done earth wide in 205 countries, by 46,235 congregations, in which 2,501,722 publishers are actively preaching. Hundreds of millions of books, Bibles and magazines are distributed annually, as the proclaimers of the good news go from house to house and make return visits on those who are interested. They also conduct Bible studies free of charge in the homes of those desirous of learning God's purposes.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

More than a hundred years ago, around 1870, a few sincere Christians began to meet in the town of Allegheny in the state of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.,

to study the Bible. Out of this small group grew the worldwide organization of Jehovah's Witnesses. These men and women have come from all walks of life, all religions, all nationalities, all tongues, and have gladly undertaken to carry out Jesus' command to preach the good news of God's Kingdom and to make disciples of people of all nations.—Rev. 7:9; Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

To organize the preaching and teaching work better, in 1881 these followers of Jesus Christ formed Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society. It was incorporated in 1884, and later the name of the corporation was changed to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. The purpose for which the corporation was formed, said its charter, was to make possible a great Bible educational work. It had to do with the Kingdom message.

As time went on, similar legal, nonprofit religious corporations were organized in other lands. All these religious corporations work harmoniously together to accomplish one work, the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom in all the world. So it is just as Jesus taught his followers—he is using his "faithful and discreet slave" organization to educate people in the truths of God's Word. (Matt. 24:45-47) In harmony with Matthew 24:14, the good news has to be preached for a witness to all the nations before the end comes. Therefore, Jehovah's Witnesses keep up their organizational preaching, and they teach and train those persons that respond to the Kingdom message. Their desire is that all lovers of righteousness will join them in this most urgent work. And they hope that mil-

lions now living will never die but will survive with them as a distinct people through the war of the great day of God the Almighty, to enjoy Paradise on earth forever.

BRANCHES

So that the religious activity of Jehovah's Witnesses may be carried on as smoothly as possible, the Watch Tower Society has established branches in many lands where the good news is now being proclaimed. The facilities in a number of these branches include printing plants where Bibles, books, magazines and other religious publications are produced for use by Jehovah's Witnesses and for distribution worldwide to benefit truth seekers. The production and distribution of these publications, such as *My Book of Bible Stories*, *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* and the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, constitute an integral part of their religious activity.

During the past service year the 2,501,722 proclaimers spent 436,720,991 hours preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. They distributed Bibles, books, magazines and pamphlets to people of all the principal nations. To date, this literature has appeared in some 190 languages.

The Watch Tower Society has sent out ministers and other representatives to the far corners of the world. These are serving in the capacity of missionaries, special pioneer workers, circuit and district overseers, and the expense for this activity alone was \$20,084,360.82 last year. Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide have gladly supported this work through voluntary contributions.

BETHEL FAMILIES

Working at the Society's headquarters and other factories, offices and farms are 6,582 members of Bethel families. Bethel means "House of God" and aptly identifies the residence of devoted men and women who care for the various activities at the 94 branch locations. The members of each Bethel family have a unique privilege of sacred service. They are able to spend their full time at various assigned duties that serve the interests of the Kingdom in all parts of the earth. By close cooperation, members of the Bethel family are able to accomplish a tremendous amount of work in getting the Kingdom message out in printed form in many languages. For example, during the past year they shared in producing a total of 53,517,808 Bibles, books and booklets, and 460,072,255 *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, besides tracts, programs, handbills and millions of pieces of other printed matter. They also shared in preaching in association with many congregations to which they are assigned.

THE WORLD REPORT

A quick rundown of the figures in the world report indicates that the vast majority of the countries have seen increases in the number of publishers and in many features of the Kingdom work. For the 205 countries listed, there has been a 6.8-percent increase in Kingdom publishers reporting service activities. The peak in publishers was 2,652,323, which is a growth of 309,689 over last year's average. The hours devoted to the preaching work also increased to the number of 436,720,991. There was a 9.8-percent increase in return visits and a 13.3-percent increase in Bible studies. It was thrilling

to see the number of those baptized, 161,896, which represents a 16.9-percent increase over 1982.

Outstanding was the Memorial attendance for 1983. On March 29, after sundown, the beginning of the Biblical day of Nisan 14, we had the greatest number ever attending the Memorial of Christ's death—6,767,707. That was an 8.2-percent increase over the previous year's record attendance. This means that 514,920 more people were present, giving evidence that the brothers gave fine support to the arrangements to help many new ones to be present for this most important Christian event of the year. We cannot help but be impressed with the potential that exists for an increase in the number of proclaimers of the good news.

INCREASES IN COUNTRY AFTER COUNTRY

In country after country we see living faith, as Jehovah's Witnesses preach the good news. We rejoice to see in Norway a 5-percent increase in publishers, with more Bible studies being conducted than ever before. In the month of June almost 9,500 more hours were devoted to the field ministry than in June of 1982. Memorial attendance was 14,135; that is 1,071 more than last year.

Finland attained a new peak in publishers when 14,365 shared in the Kingdom service in April. Conditions in the world have many people in Finland puzzled; they are wondering where this world is heading. Many of these same people are now paying attention to the message of the Kingdom. Thousands of them are accepting a home Bible study.

For example, in November 1982 two sisters going from house to house with the Kingdom message met

a young man who showed interest. They offered him the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, which he gladly accepted. He asked them if they would bring him a Bible later. In a week they returned with the Bible. He surprised them when he asked: "How can I become one of Jehovah's Witnesses?" This young man was a teacher, also a top-ranking athlete and a highly respected sports coach. A home Bible study fortified him spiritually so that he was able to withstand much opposition and any temptations that came his way. At the "Kingdom Unity" District Convention in Helsinki this last summer, he symbolized his dedication and today he is active as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

India, with an average of 5,574 publishers, registered a 9-percent increase. Bangladesh and Nepal both show increases in publishers. The branch in India sent the keyboard layout and character designs for the Devanagari script, which, when set up on the Watch Tower's MEPS computer, will give the branch the capability of typesetting Hindi, Marathi and Nepali, thus opening the door wider for millions more to hear the good news.

The 81,098 that attended the Memorial in Venezuela represented four times the number of publishers in that land! Zimbabwe had in attendance almost three times the number of its publishers. They had a 63-percent increase in the peak number of regular and auxiliary pioneers. Korea showed an outstanding increase in the pioneer work. The number of regular pioneers has passed 3,200, with an average increase of 39 percent. The auxiliary pioneers reached a new peak of 5,669 and averaged

a 34-percent increase. This activity has contributed to new all-time peaks in publishers (over 33,000 for the first time) and in placements. Magazine placements have grown 36 percent, while the obtaining of subscriptions has increased 55 percent! One brother obtained 164 subscriptions in a single month and 656 subscriptions in nine months.

Denmark showed a 9-percent increase in the number of Bible studies during the year. The average number of pioneers rose by 9 percent and auxiliary pioneers by almost 30 percent. A young girl who was a drug addict began studying the Bible; she made a remarkable change from her previous life course. In five months' time she was baptized. Her zeal moved her to auxiliary pioneer; then she became a regular pioneer. She now has a number of Bible studies with people of her former circle.

Austria rejoiced when, for the first time, the number of publishers went over the 15,000 mark. Belgium was also pleased when it passed its previous peak and now has more than 20,000 publishers. The number of pioneers increased 30 percent compared with the previous year.

Greece reports that now "all the brothers are very zealously preaching from door to door and are doing street work and informal witnessing. Their zeal for the preaching work is running very high." The number of regular pioneers increased from 397 to 636 in a year. The peak number of auxiliary pioneers more than doubled to 2,456 in April. Bible studies were at a peak of 7,811 in April. And the number of publishers reached 21,143 in August, the 20th consecutive peak.

STORMS THAT FAILED TO STOP THE WITNESSES

In March 1983 Cyclone Oscar slammed into Fiji, leaving 10,000 people homeless; of these, 50 were Jehovah's Witnesses. One Kingdom Hall was completely demolished, another badly damaged. About 100,000 people were put on food rations. One elder wrote: 'When disaster struck, how quick the brothers were to respond!' The Governing Body arranged finances to help the brothers build temporary shelters and receive food. Brothers from less damaged areas braved swollen rivers and landslides to aid in the rebuilding program. Seeing this, a man of the world said: "This is real Christianity!" In spite of two typhoons in March, the brothers reached a new all-time peak in publishers that month, namely, 806. Another peak was reached in June with 819.

MANY REMARKABLE EXPERIENCES

The increased Kingdom activity worldwide has brought the brothers much happiness and many fine experiences. A pioneer from a town in Crete had this to say: "We placed 800 tracts, along with 6 magazines and 2 books. We were full of enthusiasm. We experienced some opposition from a person who was prejudiced. He tried to arouse the people against us, but they would not respond. So when a priest walked by, he thought that the priest would support him. But to his surprise the priest replied: 'They're not doing anything wrong. It is just an advertisement, and that is not illegal.' Then a teacher approached us, accepted a tract and magazines. He mentioned that he wanted to get to know the Witnesses better. A sister gave him the address of a Kingdom Hall, and the next day

he attended the meeting. He is now making good progress in the truth."

France writes: "It was a joy to see 77,867 publishers in the field during April—a fifth peak and a 10-percent increase over the previous year. Among the immigrant population, the majority of whom are Muslims from Algeria and Tunisia, the good news is finding its way into people's hearts. With a close-knit religious and family structure, these people often meet up with severe problems when they take a stand for the truth."

Back in 1979 several Witnesses had been attacked by a certain Muslim. A brother reports: "One day on my way to a meeting I saw him on his doorstep. 'I don't want you passing in front of my house anymore,' the man said. To keep the peace, I took a small path that passed elsewhere, but he would follow me and shout abuses. Then he took out a knife and struck me on the nose. I prayed to Jehovah for help. Just then a couple of dogs appeared and started barking at him. This scared him, and he fled.

"All this hatred was because I had witnessed to his son who was a fellow worker of mine. At first the son thought I was a Catholic, and he did not want to listen. But I kept up the discussions, sharing with him what I had learned from the Bible. He closely observed how I treated workers on the job, to see whether I practiced what the Bible had to say. To please me, he accepted a couple of magazines. When I asked questions about various articles, he felt obliged to read them. He gradually started to ask questions himself. Then out of curiosity he came to a meeting at the Kingdom Hall.

Finally, he inquired about a Bible study so that he could learn more. Little by little the truth of God's Word started to penetrate. He began to make changes in his personality and he cut his hair. He got new clothes, much to the astonishment of his friends. Also he began to talk about the things he learned, but his friends made fun of him. In 1979 he symbolized his dedication to Jehovah by water immersion. The result of this informal witnessing is that 15 fellow workers, 7 Muslims, including 2 of this man's fleshly brothers, have taken their stand for the truth in the face of severe persecution from their families. One of them has even enjoyed the privilege of regular and special pioneering."

MORE NEW PEAKS

El Salvador, with 12,008 publishers, has had a series of new peaks. Their Memorial attendance reached 44,967.

In May the publishers in Ireland rose to a new peak of 2,215. The 127 baptized is the highest number in years, and that figure represents a 16.5-percent increase over the number baptized last year.

Senegal has made a special effort to preach in the interior, with good results. It reported a new peak of 389 publishers in May, as well as 688 Bible studies for the same month.

The Faroe Islands had a 15-percent increase in publishers. The average number of regular pioneers was up by 75 percent! In April, 34 percent of all publishers were either auxiliary or regular pioneers.

Ecuador had an outstanding Memorial attendance of 36,827. They have had nine publisher peaks during the 1983 service year, with 7,504 reporting in

August—a 27-percent increase over last year's average. Bible studies have grown by leaps and bounds, with eight new peaks for the year, the latest, in July, being 11,047, a 43-percent increase. For the first time ever the brothers in Ecuador are averaging one study per publisher. So prospects for future growth are indeed marvelous in that land!

There are, of course, countries that have had fantastic growth for many years. For example, Japan has had 56 consecutive peaks, with an average of 35 percent of its 77,577 publishers in the pioneer work! The number of publishers reached 82,160 in August, a 21-percent increase over the average of the last service year. Japan now has 1,504 congregations, and there is an average of more than 10 regular pioneers for every congregation!

Mexico, too, has been outstanding in its increase of publishers, reaching a peak of 133,852. They have conducted almost 160,000 home Bible studies, a 44-percent increase compared with 1982's average. One family of four conducts 18 studies.

The United States also had an outstanding year of growth. It was thrilling to see a peak of 643,170 publishers taking an active part in the ministry. Particularly encouraging is the pioneer spirit, with an average of 29,197 enrolling in the auxiliary pioneer work each month. And the Memorial attendance of 1,574,212, with 74,928 more attending than last year, shows what potential lies ahead.

LIVE FOREVER AND BIBLE STORIES BOOKS

The book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* is indeed a gift from Jehovah. It has helped many to learn the truth. In Costa Rica what was

thought to be a two-year supply of the book was exhausted in a few months. Thousands of new home Bible studies have been started with its help.

In Ireland a study was started in a Catholic home. The husband was bitterly opposed and threatened divorce. The wife, however, continued with her study. One day she gave her husband the *Live Forever* book. It had a powerful effect on him. He was attracted by its illustrations, also its clarity and directness. The next time the Witnesses called on his wife, they were greatly surprised by his more favorable attitude. This young Catholic couple were impressed to learn that God's name is Jehovah and that religious titles for men are contrary to the teachings of Jesus. Shortly after the husband began his study with the help of the book, he quit smoking. Not long thereafter they both resigned from the Catholic Church and destroyed all their so-called holy pictures. The wife was baptized recently and shares in the auxiliary pioneer work. The husband, too, is making fine progress in the ministry.

My Book of Bible Stories is still a very popular book and is helping young and old to know the Bible and to transform their lives in imitation of some of the fine Bible characters discussed in the publication. For example, a young man in Jamaica had a reputation for being a dishonest person. He was arrested twice for larceny, and he smoked marijuana. He got a copy of the *Bible Stories* book and read it. Now he is a changed man. He stopped stealing. He quit all smoking. He got a haircut. He has now begun to tell others the good news. Throughout the neighborhood the changes in this young man have become a topic of conversation.

Not too long ago a pastor in Kenya got the *Bible Stories* book. He was scheduled to deliver his sermon, but he became so engrossed in the book that he forgot about conducting a religious service at the church. The parishioners waited and waited for him to show up. Then they sent two ministers to find out why he was not coming. When the two got to the pastor's house, they found him reading the *Bible Stories* book. He had completely forgotten to go to church! But the two who came to find the pastor also got engrossed in the book, so much so that they failed to return to the church. Next the whole congregation went to the pastor's house. To their surprise, they found the three discussing the *Bible Stories* book. That morning the church service was canceled. The congregation sat around in the pastor's home and talked about *My Book of Bible Stories*. Requests for more information resulted from that timely distraction.

"KINGDOM UNITY" DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

The 1983 "Kingdom Unity" District Conventions highlighted the international unity of Jehovah's Witnesses. The 104 district conventions in the contiguous United States attained an all-time peak attendance of 1,124,070. Those baptized at these conventions numbered 10,530.

In a world so divided, it was wonderful to observe the peace and unity of God's people. The conventioners appreciated the directness and timeliness of all the counsel presented. Bible dramas emphasized the need for faithfulness, loyalty and integrity to Jehovah and his organization. The Declaration of Unity reaffirmed their determination to maintain

the grand unity into which Jehovah has gathered them like a flock in his pen. "Who Are United in This Strife-Torn World?" was the title of the public talk on Sunday. Appropriately it outlined the Scriptural reasons for the international unity that Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy. It pointed out that the Witnesses have become a "mighty nation" in the earth, drawing strength from being united under God's Kingdom, a real government for lovers of righteousness.

A unique feature of the "Kingdom Unity" District Convention was the telephone tie lines that linked together many cities with a key convention center. On July 8 and 9, 48 cities were tied together by wire. Twenty-seven of these were conventions in the United States, 17 in Canada, 3 in Hawaii and one in Bermuda. The combined attendance for those 48 conventions was over 400,000. Being joined together in this manner, the brothers felt a real sense of unity.

BUILDING EXPANSION

Expansion in the field has meant the need to expand the facilities of a number of branches. Matters pertaining to property acquisitions and construction projects received attention in the following branches: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, Hawaii, India, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Martinique, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Tahiti,

Trinidad, Venezuela, Zaïre, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In some places missionary homes had to be purchased.

Additionally there were construction projects involving Mountain Farm and Watchtower Farms in New York State. In Brooklyn, New York, the 360 Furman Street building and the 175 Pearl Street building were purchased to make room for the expansion taking place. New high-speed rotary offset presses were installed, as well as "burst" bindery equipment, to keep pace with the demand for literature in the field.

GROWING WORLD VIOLENCE

Jesus declared: "Because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matt. 24:12) In many areas of the world it takes courage to carry on the preaching activity and to travel to assemblies. Consider our brothers in El Salvador. Because of warfare, it took a little group of seven adults and their children a day and a half to get to a circuit assembly. The trip ordinarily would have taken them six hours. Despite the time and funds spent they returned home happy for having attended the assembly.

Due to outbreaks of violence in that country, some Witnesses have had to abandon their homes and properties. There is often a lack of water and electricity. Brothers have shown themselves willing to risk their lives to help interested people who have chosen to remain. In one instance the brothers walked 14 miles (23 km) to see if they could encourage the brothers who had remained and who had been so affected. They were stopped, searched and questioned by the armed forces. The result?

The soldiers were given a good witness, and literature was placed with them. When the brothers arrived at their destination, they were searched and questioned by the guerrilla authorities, who controlled the town. Again, a good witness was given. The brothers presented the brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* and told them that it, along with the Bible, would show them how to find happiness. The men showed so much interest that the brothers explained to them how to use the brochure to help others back at the camp. When the publishers finally met up with the newly interested ones and some brothers who had become inactive, they were welcomed with great appreciation for having undergone such trouble and danger to visit the group.

"How can you prove that you are neutral?" a soldier asked one Witness, a sister. "By not taking sides. I'm not on your side nor am I on the side of the others," was the reply. "How did you learn to speak so clearly and convincingly?" the soldier asked further. The Witness answered: "From the Bible. Jesus taught us to speak with boldness."

About that time another soldier spotted her tape recorder and said: "Give me that tape recorder, Woman!" She replied: "I will not give it to you, although I know you are going to take it from me." A woman accompanying the soldiers inquired: "Can you tell me how I can learn to explain my ideas to others as you do?" The reply: "Well, read the Bible." The woman explained that they did not have much time to read. The sister then said: "In the tape recorder there is a tape; listen to it." The soldiers left, taking the recorder with them.

That afternoon some fishermen came by the sis-

ter's house. One of them asked: "Lady Catalina, did the soldiers take your tape recorder?" "How did you know?" she asked. "Well, we were passing by the guerrilla camp when we heard a voice say: 'The Good News According to John.'" This sister is a fine example of courage in the face of danger.

OVERCOMING OPPOSITION

In an African land where the Kingdom work is banned, our brothers still speak the truth, but discreetly. At a filling station where a brother worked, a nun came by for gasoline. The brother spoke to her. He asked her questions, which led to a Bible study. The nun was prominent within the convent, and great effort was made to dissuade her from continuing her Bible study. Letters from "Mother Superiors" pressured her to stop the study. One "Mother Superior" made a journey by air to visit the nun. She reasoned with her this way: "If you continue with your study, you will lose all and have nothing in the end—no money, no furniture, no job, no place to go because all your relatives will disown you. What you face is a miserable life."

"God will help me," said the nun. The "Mother Superior" replied: "God does not do such things anymore." To this the nun said: "Maybe the Catholic god does not do such things anymore." But she was sure that the true God, Jehovah, would help her.

The nun committed her anxieties to Jehovah and continued her study. She resigned from the Catholic Church. Imagine her surprise when one of her relatives took her into her home! Shortly thereafter she got employment as a kindergarten teacher, even though it did not seem that she qualified for

the job. She was allowed to take her furniture out of the convent and was given a settlement of a large sum of money. So in the end, she had money, furniture, housing and work. Most of all, she had her faith in Jehovah, a God who provides. She continues to make fine progress as a preacher of the good news, trusting in Jehovah.—Prov. 3:5, 6.

A young brother in Senegal tells how prayer helped him. Opposition started as soon as he began to associate with Jehovah's Witnesses. He writes: "I found everyone against me. My parents threatened me. My father told me never to come home again. My mother not only refused to talk to me but cried incessantly. She thought I had a spell cast on me. Prayer to Jehovah is what helped me. I prayed day and night. Now, after my baptism, the attitude of my parents has softened somewhat. How happy I am to be able to help my family and to serve Jehovah who hears my prayers!"—Ps. 65:2.

REACHING OUT INTO RURAL AREAS

From Northern Ireland comes this experience: "We were trying to reach people in the rural areas, but I was having trouble with my car. So I decided that if it would not start the first time, I would work local territory instead. The car started the first time, and so we set out for the rural territory. We had a talk with a nice lady who recommended that we not go to the farm up the lane, because nobody was there. I decided to go anyway and leave a tract. When at the door, I felt: 'Might as well give a knock.' To my surprise a lady came to the door in a distressed state. Her first words: 'Are you one of Jehovah's Witnesses?' When I replied that

I was, she invited me in. I must say that she was absolutely delighted to meet one of the Witnesses.

"It so happened that three years previously, when she lived in Australia, she had a Bible study with one of the Witnesses. She felt that she did not have the courage to stand for the truth. Her family opposed her so severely that she stopped studying. She did not know that there were Witnesses in Northern Ireland. She felt that Jehovah had forsaken her. While I was there, the postman brought her a letter of encouragement from the sister with whom she had studied in Australia. On the following Sunday, she attended the meeting at the Kingdom Hall. She has done well spiritually ever since. The chain of circumstances made us feel that the angels were strongly at work that day."

NEVER OVERLOOK THE LOWLY ONES

In an African land where the work is banned a Bible study was started with a schoolteacher. But the Witness did not give the teacher's maidservant more attention than to greet her politely. The maid felt that she did not have enough education to qualify for such studies. She soon gave up this job for a better-paying one, and saved what money she could. When she thought she had enough, she went to the brother's home and asked him to teach her the Bible. Now she could pay him. The money, of course, was not accepted. The brother pointed out the principle of Matthew 10:8: "You received free, give free." A Bible study was started with her. She soon realized that she had to make changes in her life. She had had an immoral relationship with the teacher for whom she had worked. The two got

1983 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF

Letter and number following each country's name indicates the country's

Country	Population	1983 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1983 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1982
Alaska (A-31)	439,300	1,574	279	1,501	10
Algeria (H-8)	19,100,000	26	734,615	20	11
American Samoa (N-29)	32,395	84	386	80	23
Andorra (E-6)	39,940	94	425	78	-7*
Anguilla (J-42)	6,524	16	408	14	8
Antigua (J-43)	70,794	199	356	188	10
Argentina (P-42)	28,000,000	46,245	605	43,815	-1*
Aruba (J-42)	67,014	295	227	280	-2*
Australia (O-22)	15,376,100	37,636	409	35,982	9
Austria (E-7)	7,555,338	15,108	500	14,771	5
Azores (F-2)	250,700	299	838	271	-3*
Bahamas (H-41)	209,505	602	348	554	8
Bangladesh (H-17)	95,000,000	20	4,750,000	15	25
Barbados (J-43)	265,000	1,425	186	1,310	10
Belau (K-22)	13,000	30	433	27	-16*
Belgium (D-6)	9,788,017	20,230	484	19,342	4
Belize (J-39)	145,000	627	231	594	2
Benin (K-6)	3,380,000	1,269	2,664	1,062	-2*
Bermuda (G-42)	54,050	304	178	281	11
Bolivia (N-42)	5,500,000	3,462	1,589	3,228	14
Bonaire (J-42)	9,704	39	249	36	-8*
Botswana (O-9)	800,000	373	2,145	342	8
Brazil (M-43)	128,783,373	145,904	883	133,765	9
Britain (C-5)	54,773,400	92,320	593	87,732	5
Brunei (K-20)	190,300	18	10,572	9	-44*
Burma (H-18)	31,170,000	1,214	25,675	1,103	2
Burundi (L-9)	4,500,000	280	16,071	256	20
Canada (B-37)	24,716,200	77,003	321	73,139	7
Cape Verde Rep. (J-3)	301,500	155	1,945	145	17
Cayman Islands (H-40)	16,821	51	330	46	18
Central Afr. Rep. (K-8)	2,400,000	1,230	1,951	1,118	7
Chad (J-8)	4,200,000	155	27,097	114	7
Chile (O-41)	11,682,260	21,344	547	19,323	13
Colombia (K-41)	28,980,000	20,779	1,395	18,827	9
Congo (L-8)	1,600,000	917	1,745	845	6
Cook Islands (N-31)	17,000	64	266	54	-4*
Costa Rica (K-40)	2,403,781	7,511	320	6,946	11
Curaçao (J-42)	165,011	980	168	930	10
Cyprus (G-10)	500,000	1,051	476	1,033	1
Denmark (C-7)	5,113,802	14,023	365	13,580	3
Djibouti (K-11)	300,000	13	23,077	10	67
Dominica (J-43)	70,302	209	336	198	2
Dominican Rep. (J-41)	5,647,977	7,709	733	7,432	6
Ecuador (L-40)	8,829,000	7,504	1,177	6,892	17
El Salvador (J-39)	5,147,275	12,008	429	11,085	15
Equatorial Guinea (L-7)	300,060	77	3,897	60	43
Falkland Islands (S-43)	1,830	3	610	3	-40*
Faroe Islands (B-5)	44,408	83	535	69	15
Fiji (N-28)	658,000	819	803	761	3
Finland (A-9)	4,841,481	14,365	337	14,000	3

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLDWIDE

location on endsheet maps. Nos. 1-25 front and Nos. 22-46 back endsheet.

1982 Av. Pubs.	1983 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
1,361	99	148	24	259,842	968	4,033
18	2	3	3	1,431	23	80
65	5	9	1	21,200	109	266
84	2	2	1	8,523	39	208
13	1	1	1	2,462	2	30
190	7	18	4	34,023	120	552
39,927	4,149	3,456	638	7,650,441	44,029	102,839
286	12	10	5	35,291	180	927
33,153	2,160	2,426	582	6,066,759	16,160	72,457
14,052	765	811	224	2,340,307	6,944	25,638
278	18	25	12	52,499	227	834
515	57	58	11	111,513	667	2,290
12	1	5	1	5,143	35	50
1,196	92	84	16	193,453	990	3,543
32	8	1	1	11,878	78	146
18,547	1,118	1,081	289	3,103,415	7,687	40,236
585	63	55	17	120,933	600	2,906
1,082	26	26	66	109,056	686	4,536
254	17	30	4	57,542	236	680
2,839	369	513	76	948,826	4,609	14,783
39	1	2	1	7,359	34	115
318	22	28	16	64,551	348	1,217
122,661	11,649	7,283	2,498	18,451,361	98,278	392,844
83,564	5,154	6,518	1,154	14,708,668	41,725	178,293
16	1	2	1	1,361	15	62
1,082	49	184	70	314,752	858	3,334
213	11	43	9	73,823	478	729
68,410	3,670	5,395	1,131	11,831,289	35,093	148,625
124	9	17	6	38,640	283	563
39	4	8	1	11,372	52	118
1,046	50	106	42	226,165	963	5,738
107	16	26	10	52,383	172	626
17,078	1,842	1,568	288	3,527,985	23,110	70,522
17,212	1,533	1,236	289	3,248,630	20,753	80,786
795	23	28	38	113,675	759	2,924
56	2	7	4	11,778	44	238
6,275	690	415	148	1,156,323	6,846	20,351
848	66	83	11	196,283	1,194	3,152
1,020	72	68	13	155,402	483	2,057
13,173	408	694	228	1,723,233	4,296	23,476
6	1	3	1	1,912	11	44
194	12	19	7	39,607	153	758
6,983	589	687	131	1,496,247	10,894	28,072
5,905	579	708	119	1,535,075	9,906	36,827
9,611	1,457	1,105	200	2,510,088	16,383	44,967
42	9	17	3	30,369	232	325
5	1	1	1	324	3	11
60	1	14	4	17,890	35	135
737	61	119	24	185,528	787	3,061
13,620	616	1,133	255	2,202,961	6,262	23,602

Country	Population	1983 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1983 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1982
France (E-6)	54,257,000	77,867	697	75,209	6
French Guiana (K-44)	73,022	283	258	268	9
Gabon (L-7)	850,000	413	2,058	378	11
Gambia (J-4)	695,886	13	53,530	12	9
Germany, F. R. (D-7)	59,676,500	106,834	559	104,931	3
Ghana (K-6)	11,649,476	23,298	500	22,082	4
Gibraltar (F-5)	31,183	103	303	96	16
Greece (F-9)	9,740,417	21,143	461	20,533	7
Greenland (A-44)	51,903	72	721	68	-4*
Grenada (J-43)	112,000	331	338	314	
Guadeloupe (J-43)	324,000	3,185	102	3,064	8
Guam (J-24)	105,979	212	500	201	13
Guatemala (J-39)	7,000,000	6,630	1,056	6,325	7
Guinea (K-4)	5,143,284	199	25,846	152	-1*
Guinea-Bissau (K-4)	530,000	8	66,250	6	
Guyana (K-43)	842,000	1,181	713	1,147	5
Haiti (J-41)	6,000,000	3,530	1,700	3,248	6
Hawaii (H-31)	993,700	4,953	201	4,812	6
Honduras (J-39)	3,955,116	3,318	1,192	3,162	7
Hong Kong (H-20)	5,300,000	1,120	4,732	1,077	11
Iceland (A-3)	231,958	146	1,589	133	16
India (H-15)	710,000,000	5,842	121,534	5,574	9
Ireland (D-5)	4,907,217	2,215	2,215	2,124	5
Israel (G-10)	5,466,000	297	18,404	281	8
Italy (E-7)	56,243,935	105,709	532	102,714	9
Ivory Coast (K-5)	9,273,167	1,710	5,423	1,640	11
Jamaica (J-41)	2,300,000	7,176	321	6,842	4
Japan (F-23)	118,601,534	82,160	1,444	77,577	15
Jordan (G-10)	3,500,000	61	57,377	54	29
Kenya (L-10)	18,000,000	3,005	5,990	2,840	10
Kiribati (L-27)	60,000	12	5,000	11	57
Korea (F-21)	40,000,000	33,171	1,206	31,044	7
Kosrae (K-26)	6,005	33	182	27	13
Lebanon (G-10)	3,000,000	2,014	1,490	1,865	3
Lesotho (P-9)	1,365,910	746	1,831	657	3
Liberia (K-5)	1,800,000	1,137	1,583	1,082	5
Libya (H-8)	2,856,000	18	158,667	7	133
Liechtenstein (E-7)	26,380	40	660	37	16
Luxembourg (D-6)	435,500	1,082	402	1,048	4
Macao (H-20)	375,000	12	31,250	11	22
Madagascar (N-12)	9,483,000	1,530	6,198	1,408	21
Madeira (G-4)	258,240	421	613	396	8
Malaysia (K-19)	14,400,312	634	22,713	618	7
Mali (J-6)	7,000,000	42	166,667	40	5
Malta (F-7)	360,222	232	1,553	201	42
Marshall Islands (K-27)	31,042	200	155	136	7
Martinique (J-43)	328,566	1,429	230	1,370	10
Mauritania (J-4)	1,700,000	2	850,000	2	New
Mauritius (N-13)	958,914	600	1,595	549	13
Mayotte (N-11)	53,000	9	5,889	6	500

1982 Av. Pubs.	1983 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
71,095	4,412	3,635	1,221	11,876,440	38,807	154,103
245	21	19	4	57,120	400	949
342	19	12	13	52,921	427	1,067
11	1	4	1	7,234	38	70
101,454	4,781	4,269	1,494	14,855,646	38,818	182,416
21,287	1,373	2,136	482	4,386,628	26,887	84,476
83	10	3	1	10,942	25	155
19,112	819	1,320	439	3,229,663	6,945	36,698
71	5	7	7	11,110	38	128
314	8	30	7	60,986	298	1,038
2,848	213	100	42	467,124	3,240	8,873
178	21	40	1	58,488	270	687
5,921	522	372	104	1,060,061	6,206	24,189
154	4	41	12	63,651	258	813
6		1	1	772	10	20
1,095	71	158	29	258,156	1,080	3,874
3,077	216	233	76	617,748	4,171	18,713
4,558	228	671	60	1,109,396	4,497	14,151
2,966	218	271	68	678,383	4,290	16,542
972	119	239	14	386,828	1,526	2,361
115	11	15	2	30,009	88	349
5,136	384	579	254	1,112,969	3,454	16,834
2,021	127	313	77	554,453	1,012	4,328
261	15	21	5	50,906	170	600
94,648	8,338	9,920	1,489	21,718,296	65,736	233,042
1,472	91	173	47	389,263	2,344	6,284
6,588	468	421	166	1,040,470	5,213	19,256
67,730	8,932	27,399	1,504	34,247,263	113,065	198,052
42	3	2	2	5,943	39	153
2,583	282	518	98	943,953	4,262	8,567
7		3	1	4,604	17	55
28,891	2,403	5,491	562	8,002,637	26,101	71,535
24	3	4	1	7,087	35	111
1,811	104	83	48	272,910	1,141	4,211
635	52	67	42	141,236	539	3,212
1,030	57	115	30	250,166	1,339	5,120
3		603		603	6	6
32		3	1	6,026	25	78
1,006	72	82	20	193,279	734	2,431
9		6	1	8,983	20	38
1,159	164	102	31	260,139	2,206	6,170
367	35	23	11	63,035	327	1,050
579	55	77	18	168,550	927	1,573
38	2	15	1	24,341	123	103
142	39	25	2	47,718	131	415
127	4	28	2	39,408	228	898
1,245	110	58	22	215,199	1,162	3,634
				24	1	2
486	60	55	10	114,779	534	1,464
1		2	1	3,248	17	24

Country	Population	1983 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1983 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1982
Mexico (H-38)	75,029,693	133,852	561	122,327	15
Montserrat (J-42)	12,335	30	411	22	
Morocco (G-5)	20,419,555	91	224,391	82	-4 *
Nauru (L-26)	6,000	4	1,500	2	
Nepal (G-16)	14,000,000	28	500,000	26	37
Netherlands (D-6)	14,362,428	27,590	521	26,995	1
Nevis (J-42)	11,230	42	267	29	7
New Caledonia (N-26)	147,500	580	254	495	16
New Zealand (Q-27)	3,203,300	8,556	374	7,580	6
Niger (J-7)	4,990,000	77	64,805	67	-3 *
Nigeria (K-7)	83,728,000	108,189	774	102,356	6
Niue (N-29)	3,232	9	359	8	
Norway (A-7)	4,129,610	7,358	561	7,140	5
Pakistan (G-14)	92,000,000	221	416,290	207	7
Panama (K-40)	2,088,585	3,652	572	3,462	4
Papua New Guinea (L-23)	3,006,799	1,626	1,849	1,557	7
Paraguay (O-43)	3,150,893	1,891	1,666	1,734	7
Peru (M-41)	18,900,000	17,183	1,100	15,788	9
Philippines (J-21)	50,000,000	71,912	695	64,601	7
Ponape (K-25)	23,140	76	304	67	14
Portugal (F-5)	9,345,000	25,118	372	23,341	9
Puerto Rico (J-42)	3,300,000	18,460	179	17,991	7
Réunion (O-13)	515,814	760	679	744	10
Rodrigues (N-14)	34,834	19	1,833	17	13
Rota (J-24)	1,274	9	142	6	100
Rwanda (L-9)	5,600,000	350	16,000	324	14
St. Eustatius (J-42)	1,335	3	445	3	200
St. Helena (N-5)	6,000	93	65	79	-6 *
St. Kitts (J-42)	35,135	114	308	104	5
St. Lucia (J-43)	115,000	318	362	275	10
St. Martin (J-42)	15,926	89	179	77	8
St. Pierre & Miquelon (D-43)	6,000	13	462	10	43
St. Vincent (J-43)	108,000	138	783	125	7
Saipan (J-24)	15,519	26	597	21	-9 *
San Marino (E-7)	21,622	75	288	73	-3 *
São Tomé (L-7)	80,000	17	4,706	14	75
Senegal (J-4)	6,000,000	389	15,424	375	3
Seychelles (L-13)	69,000	53	1,302	50	11
Sierra Leone (K-4)	3,354,000	709	4,731	614	4
Solomon Islands (M-26)	249,500	615	407	567	13
South Africa (P-9)	30,981,999	31,744	976	30,345	10
South-West Africa (O-8)	1,031,927	337	3,062	302	5
Spain (F-5)	38,118,000	53,496	713	51,485	5
Sri Lanka (K-16)	15,300,000	764	20,026	715	7
Sudan (J-9)	22,000,000	147	149,660	133	19
Suriname (K-43)	350,000	946	370	887	7
Swaziland (O-10)	554,589	742	747	652	-1 *
Sweden (A-8)	8,330,700	19,101	436	18,439	5
Switzerland (E-7)	6,467,200	11,905	543	11,582	5
Syria (G-10)	9,100,000	129	70,543	63	-50 *

Worldwide Report

1982 Av. Pubs.	1983 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
106,573	13,070	10,068	4,474	22,602,302	138,795	619,564
22	2	2	1	4,484	25	111
85	1	7	2	19,124	60	186
2				217	1	20
19		3	1	5,189	15	81
26,618	1,057	1,585	290	3,907,612	8,024	47,097
27		6	1	10,965	34	91
428	80	35	8	94,093	563	1,426
7,132	386	582	119	1,268,142	4,304	17,523
69	6	17	5	27,131	86	152
96,489	3,587	5,849	2,212	15,944,359	80,435	303,994
8			1	674	4	49
6,824	311	226	177	787,393	2,197	14,135
193	18	46	6	72,316	324	658
3,321	265	267	76	627,251	3,940	12,678
1,460	114	144	83	308,090	1,677	6,529
1,617	77	154	44	312,779	1,697	4,391
14,530	1,574	2,019	321	3,862,378	19,476	67,192
60,098	4,381	7,116	2,236	11,762,119	30,357	203,991
59	1	17	1	23,967	84	314
21,447	1,861	1,283	395	3,243,527	15,397	61,479
16,817	1,100	1,014	244	2,840,227	13,869	53,177
677	56	43	12	129,166	506	2,107
15	3	1	1	2,349	14	47
3	1	3		3,034	11	18
285	60	46	15	111,144	694	1,020
1		1		928	8	30
84		1	2	6,956	21	196
99		11	2	21,110	94	277
249	28	34	5	55,999	291	1,066
71	10	6	1	13,480	51	281
7		1	1	1,817	9	30
117	2	13	4	26,549	107	397
23	1	8	1	12,951	40	67
75		3	1	11,542	21	133
8	4	3	1	5,622	48	115
365	25	64	9	124,225	571	963
45	5	2	1	8,151	54	154
588	21	110	32	186,386	860	2,942
504	38	67	32	129,550	545	2,405
27,587	1,822	2,393	918	5,572,819	21,271	92,350
287	24	27	13	87,529	325	870
48,938	3,547	3,816	832	9,256,352	33,795	115,667
669	42	115	24	204,192	826	2,559
112	14	12	3	34,023	245	367
830	57	92	15	175,831	826	2,773
658	26	43	38	127,705	483	2,426
17,781	865	1,506	315	2,898,294	8,653	32,556
11,049	600	415	238	1,650,807	6,547	22,719
126	1	2	7	6,052	26	305

Country	Population	1983 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1983 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1982
Tahiti (N-32)	157,000	538	292	492	6
Taiwan (H-20)	18,500,000	960	19,271	932	3
Tanzania (M-10)	20,400,000	1,910	10,681	1,837	8
Thailand (J-18)	50,731,000	821	61,792	793	3
Togo (K-6)	2,732,875	2,232	1,224	1,907	17
Tonga (N-29)	90,128	41	2,198	35	17
Trinidad (K-43)	1,106,638	3,627	305	3,367	4
Truk (K-24)	38,650	43	899	35	9
Tunisia (G-7)	6,535,000	49	133,367	42	-2*
Turkey (F-10)	45,000,000	800	56,250	771	2
Turks & Caicos Isls. (H-41)	7,436	33	225	31	7
Tuvalu Islands (M-28)	8,000	23	348	18	6
Uganda (L-10)	14,500,000	279	51,971	240	13
U.S. of America (F-38)	231,932,000	643,170	361	616,058	6
Upper Volta (K-5)	7,318,695	201	36,411	186	11
Uruguay (P-43)	2,850,000	4,799	594	4,458	6
Vanuatu (N-27)	130,000	55	2,364	48	45
Venezuela (K-42)	17,000,000	22,194	766	20,392	13
Virgin Isls. (Brit.) (J-42)	12,000	84	143	80	5
Virgin Isls. (U.S.) (J-42)	96,000	474	203	448	
Wallis & Futuna Isls. (N-28)	12,500	3	4,167	2	
West Berlin (D-7)	1,869,600	4,968	376	4,893	2
Western Samoa (M-29)	160,000	161	994	136	10
Yap (K-23)	9,320	51	183	46	15
Zaire (L-9)	30,000,000	28,126	1,067	26,234	6
Zambia (N-9)	6,242,000	57,034	109	52,994	1
Zimbabwe (N-9)	7,542,300	12,753	591	11,552	8
177 Countries	2,399,199		2,272,630		7.1
* 28 Other Countries	253,124		229,092		4.0

GRAND TOTAL (205 countries) 2,652,323 2,501,722 6.8

* Percentage of decrease

* Work banned and reports are incomplete

married. Now they live together as husband and wife and are active in the Christian ministry.

KINDNESS BEARS FRUIT

Traveling from England to Ireland aboard a car ferry, a woman with a very young baby was feeling the distressing effects of seasickness. One of the Witness sisters offered to look after the baby until the woman felt better. After a three-and-a-half-hour

1982 Av. Pubs.	1983 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Attend- ance
462	33	41	11	84,371	447	1,289
909	61	168	23	261,176	951	2,926
1,701	124	197	83	417,851	1,536	5,372
771	49	121	27	206,725	680	1,886
1,628		68	67	237,916	1,933	5,717
30	4	8	1	13,736	55	164
3,243	266	386	44	661,292	3,253	9,750
32		10	2	15,587	89	366
43		2	1	4,473	24	86
753	22	45	12	132,787	452	1,415
29	1	6	1	11,099	58	122
17	4	3	1	4,691	31	155
213	42	41	11	83,296	492	848
581,934	35,303	52,808	7,837	103,985,822	390,678	1,574,212
168	22	40	8	73,394	362	786
4,186	297	432	90	887,719	5,043	14,516
33	8	4	2	10,578	90	211
18,048	1,752	1,930	212	4,259,711	25,754	81,098
76	4	2	3	9,121	59	339
449	27	34	8	76,751	455	1,640
2		1		271	3	
4,805	143	208	61	699,290	1,932	7,891
124	19	18	2	35,339	126	594
40	4	12	1	18,045	84	106
24,648	2,593	4,591	905	7,920,238	42,908	123,718
52,556	2,707	3,825	1,393	9,104,427	60,882	282,984
10,676	634	750	480	1,949,290	7,868	33,914
2,122,372	151,662	200,471	41,708	413,970,263	1,678,617	6,343,307
220,262	10,234	5,627	4,527	22,750,728	118,495	424,400
2,342,634	161,896	206,098	46,235	436,720,991	1,797,112	6,767,707

MEMORIAL PARTAKERS WORLDWIDE: 9,292

journey, the woman thanked the sister for her help. "I really don't know how to thank you for your kind help with the baby," she said. The sister replied: "I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The next time a Witness calls at your door, please listen to what he has to say." A few years went by, and then they met each other again. Where? At a district convention in Dublin! They embraced each other like long-lost

sisters. This lady had indeed listened when a Witness called on her the next time. Now she and her husband are dedicated servants of Jehovah.

YOUTHS PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS

Judy lives in Nairobi. She is five years old. She accompanies her mother regularly in the field service. She knows how to give a simple magazine presentation. One month she placed over 50 magazines by herself.

Judy's sister, Mary, is 13 years old. She, too, is a good Witness. One day at school her examination paper had the question: "Where are the dead?" Mary answered according to the Bible, that the dead are in the grave. The teacher marked her answer wrong. Mary went to the teacher to find out why her answer was wrong. The teacher said that 'everybody knows that when you die you go to heaven.' Mary opened her Bible to John 5:28, 29 and showed the teacher that the dead are in the grave awaiting a resurrection. Seeing what the Bible said, the teacher marked Mary's paper as having the right answer and all the others wrong. As you can imagine, considerable discussion followed. This resulted in Mary's placing 20 copies of the *Secure Future* booklet with her classmates. She even started a Bible study with a classmate. What a joy it was to see the classmate at the next circuit assembly!

Glancing back at the past service year's activities and all that was accomplished, we can say humbly with the psalmist: "[Jehovah,] you have crowned the year with your goodness." (Ps. 65:11) How? Because of the great witness given with the aid of his spirit.

ACTS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN MODERN TIMES

Jesus Christ declared that "this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations"—despite opposition and obstacles! (Matt. 24:14) It is inspiring to read how Jehovah's people in modern times are fulfilling Jesus' words, no matter what the difficulties. You will be encouraged to read of the development of Kingdom preaching in the following lands:

BELGIUM: Learn how Jehovah's work started among a few coal miners in the early 1900's. Then came opposition, especially during the Nazi era. Read of marvelous examples of Jehovah's protection upon his people—even the determined opposition of a Gestapo chief was frustrated. Postwar nationalism raised other obstacles, yet all were overcome with Jehovah's help.

ALASKA: In this vast land Jehovah's people have endured cold, snow and ice to reach people with the good news. Missionaries from Gilead helped blaze the trail of Kingdom preaching, getting the work on a solid footing. Learn how the missionaries coped with witnessing when there were only a couple of hours of light each day during the winter months. Reaching people in the interior has been a great challenge, yet the Kingdom message has gone out to all the inhabitants of Alaska, including the Indian, Eskimo and Aleut people.

FIJI AND NEIGHBORING ISLANDS: Here is a remarkable story of brothers going where the need is greater to open up the Kingdom work in remote islands of the South Pacific. The problem of vast distances and opposition from officials had to be overcome. This was done, all glory going to Jehovah.

May these accounts inspire you to overcome any obstacles or opposition in your territory as you endeavor to reach the people with the good news before the end comes.

Belgium



BELGIUM is situated at the crossroads between France, Germany, the Netherlands and England. Its history is closely linked with these nations, which many times settled their politico-religious differences here. During the domination of successive powers—Spanish, Austrian, French and Dutch—the Roman Catholic Church did not remain neutral. On the contrary, it distinguished itself, as history relates, by a barbarous slaughter of thousands of humans during the terrible Inquisition, supposedly in the name of God.

In 1830 Belgium declared independence, but this

did not dispel the dense spiritual darkness. Charles Taze Russell, the first of Jehovah's Witnesses to come to Belgium, visited the cities of Antwerp and Brussels in 1891 and perceived this religious darkness. As elsewhere, he found the people oppressed by apostate Christendom and deprived of Bible truths.

Fear of the clergy and of their unscriptural doctrine of a fiery hell kept the people from opening the pages of the Bible. They would say: "We are not allowed to read the Bible . . . This book is banned . . . It's forbidden." Some elderly people in small villages still remember the sinister prohibition of the Catholic Church against Bible reading.

But the claim that Belgium was a Catholic country could not prevent the carrying out of Christ's command to preach the good news of God's Kingdom. The message of God's Kingdom that Brother Russell set out to spread was about to reach the hearts of sincere Catholics in this country, be they Dutch, French or German speaking.

The Flemings, who make up about 60 percent of the population, live in northern Belgium (called Flanders) and speak Dutch. The Walloons, who make up about 40 percent of the people, live in southern Belgium and speak French. Both ethnic groups also live in Brussels, the country's capital. In addition, some 60,000 German-speaking people live in eastern Belgium near the German border.

THE FIRST SEEDS ARE PLANTED

One day in 1901 Jean-Baptiste Tilmant, Sr., of Jumet-Gohissart, a small coal-mining town on the outskirts of Charleroi, saw the books *Millennial*

*Dawn** advertised in a newspaper. He immediately ordered the first two volumes and began reading them. What a comfort! What a thrill for him to see the truth of the Gospel shining forth! How could he possibly refrain from speaking about these things to his friends? The following year, in 1902, he gathered his friends together in his home to study the Holy Scriptures, and each Sunday thereafter this small group continued holding such meetings.

At that time the light of the truth had already penetrated into other European countries, particularly Switzerland, where Brother Adolphe Weber was taking care of Kingdom interests for part of Europe. Brother Tilmant's great thirst for the truth moved him to write to this brother for more information. In answer, Brother Weber extended his missionary tours to Charleroi to strengthen the faith of this small group.

The spiritual food that "the faithful and discreet slave" had been giving out in the English language was now to be dispensed to the French-speaking people as well. In 1903 *Zion's Watch Tower* appeared for the first time in French. The light of truth was destined to shine very brightly in this coal-mining area. So, regularly each Sunday, this small group of Bible Students, as they were then called, would go into the "field," distributing the seeds of truth contained in the eight pages of this magazine. The magazines were offered to those

* Later this series was referred to as *Studies in the Scriptures*.

coming out of Christendom's churches on Sunday morning. Thus the first two French issues of *Zion's Watch Tower* were given a wide distribution.

EXPANSION BEGINS

Little by little the small group at Jumet-Gohissart extended its preaching activity to other sections of the country, especially in the southern part where French was spoken. It was only later on that the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium was to be reached with the truth of God's Kingdom.

Then, in August of 1904, ten years before the first world war, these courageous bearers of good news were seen carrying on their activity as far as Denain, in France. There, in front of a Baptist church, they once again offered the magazines to those coming out of the building. What result? Two years later, in 1906, a congregation was formed in Denain.

Other study groups were formed, as Jean-Baptiste Tilmant and his fellow workers courageously spread Bible truths. Such expansion made the opening of a literature depot necessary, and this was arranged at Jumet-Gohissart in the home of Brother Tilmant.

FROM FRANCE TO BELGIUM

Belgium is, of course, a next-door neighbor to France, and from now on it would no longer be the Belgian brothers who would go to France but vice versa. The groups established in France grew to the point that in 1913 over a thousand people gathered together at Denain to hear a talk by Brother J. F. Rutherford.

François Caré, who learned the truth in France, came to Liège about the year 1910 to visit a Protestant friend named Edouard Verdière. Brother Caré, no longer able to keep this burning fire of truth to himself, wanted to help his friend to get out of false religion. However, Mr. Verdière's reaction was one of opposition, so much so that Brother Caré finally said, "I don't want to discuss this with you any longer. I'm not going to throw my pearls before swine." And with that, Brother Caré went to bed.

During the night Mr. Verdière kept turning that phrase over and over in his mind and next morning he asked the brother what he had meant. The brother replied that he would no longer mention the truth, as it was apparent that the "pearls" were not accepted. The man became more conciliatory, and so, after he returned to France, Brother Caré began sending the magazines regularly to his friend who was working in a coal mine. He had also sent him several volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Rapidly his friend Verdière accepted the truth and began giving public talks. In fact, he was one of the brothers who spoke at Brother Jean-Baptiste Tilmant's funeral in 1911.

So it came about that in this other section of Belgium, in Liège, the light of truth began to penetrate the spiritual darkness.

CLERGY OPPOSITION

In the same coal mine where Edouard Verdière worked was another sincere seeker of truth by the name of Leonard Smets. Leonard Smets was a very sincere Catholic, regularly attending reli-



gious services with his family. Even on his way to church he would pray, using his rosary. Of Flemish descent, he settled down in Heure-le-Romain, not far from Vivegnis, Liège. Then, in 1900, a Protestant offered him a Bible, saying, "I have God's Book."

One day while at confession, Leonard Smets confessed to the priest that he had been reading the Bible. The priest replied that if he wanted to be absolved of his sins, he would first have to bring the Bible to the priest. From that day on, Leonard Smets stopped attending the Catholic Church, thinking to himself: 'If they are really sincere, they'll come looking for me since it's their duty to go out searching for the lost sheep.' But the priest never came. So Leonard Smets started attending the Protestant religious services.

While at work in the coal mine, Smets would read his New Testament. Verdière noticed this one day, and wanting to know to which religion he belonged, he started singing a Protestant hymn. This caught the attention of Smets, who asked Verdière if he, too, was a Protestant. Verdière replied: "I used to be, but I have something better for you." He then handed him a copy of *Zion's Watch Tower* and gave him a thorough witness. That was in 1912.

In turn Leonard Smets did not keep this good news to himself but shared it with a Flemish fellow worker, Joseph Poelmans, a father of seven children. Disgusted with the teachings of Catholicism, this man had also turned to Protestantism. Upon reading the magazine that Smets gave him,

however, he also recognized it as being the truth.

In due time these three miners, Verdière, Smets and Poelmans, decided to go and ask the Protestant minister of Herstal, Liège, about the teachings of the immortality of the human soul, the Trinity and hellfire. Instead of helping them, the pastor became very angry and chased them away! They discovered that he was no better than the Catholic priest. So the three of them started studying the Holy Scriptures regularly, using the magazines they had received from France.

FAMILY OPPOSITION

Brother Smets' wife, who could not read or write, opposed his stand for the truth to such a degree that she was ready to leave him, taking their eight children with her. One day, before her husband's return from work, she gathered her children together to tell them of her intentions. Her 15-year-old son, Marcel, the eldest of the children, who later on became a Witness, asked his mother: "Does Daddy beat you? Is he a drunkard? Does he keep his pay for himself?" Mrs. Smets replied, "No." Marcel then informed his mother that he would not leave. At this very moment the father arrived home from work and very calmly said to his family, "If you leave, I'll still continue to help you with the garden and chop the wood." After such an expression of love, this family stayed united.

GROWTH BY 1912

By 1912 there were seven groups that met for study and service. They were located at Haine St. Paul, Flémalle-Haute, Engis, Amay, Ampsin

and Liège, and at Jumet-Gohissart where the first group had been formed in 1902. These study groups met together once a month, and periodically Brother Weber from the Swiss office paid them a visit.

THEIR FIRST ASSEMBLY STRENGTHENS FAITH

Toward the beginning of the following year, the Belgian brothers received a visit from Brother J. F. Rutherford and held their first assembly at Jumet-Gohissart. How greatly this assembly strengthened their faith in the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom then so near at hand!

THEIR FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Some months later, on August 31, 1913, these same brothers had the privilege of attending another assembly, not in Belgium this time, but in Paris, France. There they gathered together for a one-day international convention with other Bible Students who had come from Switzerland, Germany and France to listen to the Watch Tower Society's president, C. T. Russell. Brother Russell had just come from a somewhat larger convention held in Southport, England, but he was greatly moved to see an attendance of 70 zealous brothers and sisters who had traveled long distances and had come from four different lands. Although unable to understand their language, he could detect their deep interest for the truth, which showed on their faces. With the help of an interpreter, they were strengthened by the announcement that 1914 would be a marked year. What a memorable day that turned out to be!

1914—A MARKED YEAR

Before the beginning of that marked year, or in the latter part of 1913, the average attendance at the study groups was 70. Then 1914 arrived, and the people had not forgotten what those faithful publishers had foretold for that year. While the brothers were busy digging up their potatoes in the garden, the people would make fun of them because in 1913 the brothers had said that when 1914 arrived, people would dig up their potatoes to the sound of cannons. Shortly thereafter, the first world war broke out in Europe, transforming Belgium into a battlefield. The evidence that the Gentile Times had indeed ended encouraged these Bible Students to continue in their preaching assignments.—Luke 21:24-26.

During the war these humble coal miners were also zealous assembly attenders. To get to an assembly they would walk 99 kilometers (62 mi) from Liège to Charleroi, alongside the railroad tracks.

The years that followed 1914 were going to test each one's faith to the limit. (Rev. 2:10) While 1914 proved to be the marked year spoken of in the Bible, it was not yet time for the Christian congregation to be carried away to heaven, as many brothers had expected. An unprecedented witnessing work had yet to be accomplished. Who would prove himself obedient to Christ's command to preach "this good news of the kingdom" before the end would come? (Matt. 24:14) There were several who lacked the zeal, as well as the desire, to preach God's Kingdom publicly, and they disassociated themselves from Jehovah's people. Pamphlets, putting more emphasis on personal

opinions than on God's revealed truths, started to circulate among the small groups.

A CLEANSING WORK TAKES PLACE

In 1918, after the cleansing, or weeding out of those opposed to the harvest work, only five faithful servants of Jehovah were left to announce God's Kingdom. They included: the Tilmant family, Brother Fontaine of Haine St. Paul, and Brothers Smets and Poelmans of Liège. Even Edouard Verdière, who had been so zealous in giving public talks and in showing the Photo-Drama of Creation, was no longer among them. Tears fell from Brother Poelmans' eyes as he saw so many brothers withdrawing from Jehovah's organization. About 30 years later, or around 1950, Edouard Verdière came back to Jehovah's organization, and he continued in association with the brothers until his death.

Pamphlets printed by the "evil slave" continued circulating among the study groups. Unwavering faith in Jehovah and his visible organization was essential for one to stand up against those hoping to subvert the faithful brothers. During a meeting Brother Poelmans gave a clear and enthusiastic talk designed to uphold the brothers' confidence in Jehovah's organization. The speaker to follow, however, withdrew himself as he had prepared a talk completely different from that of Brother Poelmans.

Those who remained faithful did not lose courage. As never before, and with increased zeal, they proclaimed the Messianic Kingdom throughout the country, announcing that "Millions Now Living

Will Never Die." The result was that two years later, in 1920, the attendance at the Memorial was a total of 14 at Jumet-Gohissart and Charleroi and 40 at Liège. Those who stopped associating with Jehovah's people in 1918, either because of fear of man or for refusing to cooperate with "the faithful and discreet slave," sank into oblivion.

JEHOVAH BLESSES THE HUMBLE

The Dutch-speaking part of Belgium was not deprived of the Kingdom message for long. Brother J. Poelmans traveled the 120 kilometers (75 mi) by bicycle from Liège to Antwerp to spread the word of truth to the people there in Belgium's largest city.

Brother Poelmans' activity, however, was not limited to Antwerp. He and Brother L. Smets preached from door to door in Liège as well, although they were the only two who did. Neither of them could write very well, so they assigned the task of filling out their field service reports to those not participating in the house-to-house work. Their service reports were sent to the Swiss branch, which looked after the work in Belgium until 1929. The brothers at the office in Switzerland, however, insisted that these two brothers fill out their reports themselves, to the best of their ability.

Brother Smets had acquired a remarkable understanding of the Bible. In 1931 he quit his job at the coal mine and became an auxiliary, or auxiliary pioneer, as we would say today. Imitating the apostle Paul, he became a burden to no one but worked as a cobbler to feed and care for his

family. Even while repairing shoes he managed to read his Bible, opened up in front of him. He preserved an extraordinary clearness of mind right up until his death in 1964 at the age of 95.

ADVERTISE THE KINGDOM!

In 1922 Brother Poelmans had the opportunity to attend an assembly held at Denain, France, where, as he explains, he saw a brother holding up a large banner and calling out with a loud voice: "The King is at hand. Advertise the King and his Kingdom." That morning all those in attendance went from house to house announcing the establishment of God's Kingdom.

INCREASED ACTIVITY IN LIÈGE

The work took on its greatest impetus in the district of Liège, where Brothers Smets and Poelmans used every opportunity to give a witness. Having noticed that Brother Poelmans was of Flemish descent, the people nicknamed him "the little Fleming." Even during a parade in 1925 in honor of the then king of Belgium, Albert I, Brothers Smets and Poelmans sought to make good use of their time. Mingling in with the others marching in the parade, they held up a large sign with the words: "Millions Now Living Will Never Die." They followed the procession right to the end without being disturbed.

The small group of 13 at Liège kept growing as another valiant Kingdom publisher joined them

Brother Ernest Heuse, Sr., and family
—all in the full-time service

in 1928. This was Ernest Heuse, Sr., and he is still pioneering at the age of 82. Today, his three children and their wives, as well as his three grandchildren and the wives of the two who are married, making a total of 12 in the family, are all serving full time. All together, at the end of 1982, they had spent 244 years in the full-time service. Most of them are special pioneers, some are in circuit and district work and one is serving on the Branch Committee.

While Brothers Poelmans, Smets and Heuse were busy going from house to house announcing God's Kingdom, the other brothers criticized them, saying that they were incapable of doing such a work. These critics had forgotten that "God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame." (1 Cor. 1:27) Those who were not progressive and who remained attached to their past way of living, influenced by false religious ideas, refused to put on the Christlike



At an assembly in Liège in 1952 Brothers Poelmans and Smets rejoice that the 5 publishers had grown to more than 3,000



new personality. An example of this was seen in the attitude of the one presiding at the meetings of the small group in Liège. He preferred, as do the religious leaders, to call attention to himself as an elected elder instead of going in the field service. Before beginning the study of *The Watch Tower*, and since he was chairman, he was served with a cup of tea and a piece of cake, which he ate in front of the others who would sit there watching him. Then the meeting started.

Fear of man hindered still others from going from door to door with the publications during the day, so they waited until dusk. Then they would slip a few tracts under the doors or they would even pay a retired pensioner to do this for them. However, Jehovah proved to be with those who really loved him and who were not afraid of spreading his word of truth in broad daylight.

EXPANSION IN FLEMISH TERRITORY

Brother Poelmans continued visiting the Flemish territory, and in 1928 he made a return visit in Genk-Winterslag on a former coal miner who

Belgium

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was Polish. This return visit on André Wozniak resulted in his coming into the truth. It was from this year onward that the Kingdom message made real progress in the Dutch-speaking part of the country. Up until then study groups existed only in the French-speaking part of Belgium.

Two years later, in 1930, Brother Wozniak started out in the colporteur work, or regular pioneer service as it is called today. He proved to be one of the most courageous colporteurs of the good news in the Flemish territory. He was a man of action, sincere and fully dedicated to the interests of God's Kingdom. He served faithfully until his death at the age of 74, after spending 43 years in the full-time service, including the circuit and special pioneer activity.

BRANCH OFFICE ESTABLISHED

In 1929 it became appropriate for a branch office to be established in Belgium, and Brussels was chosen as the most suitable location. Brother Van Eijck of Holland served as branch overseer. This branch was still under the direct supervision of the Bern office, with Brother Martin Harbeck in charge, but as time went by, the Belgian branch came under the direct supervision of the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn.

For the first time, extensive records of service activity were kept, showing 28 publishers during 1929 busy helping others to get free from religious bondage. Included in this number were nine colporteurs, who, together with the publishers, or class workers as they were then called, distributed 41,358 books and booklets that year.

FURTHER EXPANSION

The harvest was great, but the Lord's workers were few in Belgium in 1930. Out of the 46 brothers, only 27 went from house to house preaching God's Kingdom to the then 7,000,000 inhabitants of this country.

Nevertheless, the brothers, and especially the newly formed Brussels group, were greatly uplifted at their assembly held in Brussels that year. Of the 100 persons in attendance 20 came from France, Switzerland and England. Although they spoke 12 different languages, the brothers could sense the deep unity existing among them. It was at this assembly that Brother Wozniak decided to enter the pioneer service. He obtained much literature, enabling him to witness in another Dutch-speaking province of Belgium, the Limburg.

In that same year several English pioneers settled down in Flanders. One of them, Sister Louie Berry, had the privilege of attending a meeting in Brussels where 13 Bible Students had gathered together in a kitchen to discuss the words of Isaiah 60:22: "The little one himself will become a thousand." Those words would certainly come true in Belgium.

Their first large international convention, held in May 1931 with 3,000 brothers from 23 lands meeting together in Paris, gave the Belgian brothers the needed incentive and determination to move forward to the best of their ability in their divinely assigned work.

But how was a small group of 27 publishers going to spread the good news throughout the whole

country in the face of repeated assaults from the Catholic Church, which continually stirred up the people against them and pressured the police into expelling the foreign pioneers? Jehovah's hand was present to protect these fearless publishers who obeyed Christ's command to preach this good news of the Kingdom.—Isa. 51:16; Matt. 24:14.

PIONEERS' STEADFASTNESS

The majority of the pioneers in Belgium had come from England, France and Switzerland. Those who found it difficult to speak Dutch or French used the testimony card to give a witness. These foreign brothers achieved excellent results. For example, in 1931 one Polish brother placed 2,110 books and 10,338 booklets, and an English pioneer placed 15,000 booklets. But these results were not achieved without opposition. As soon as the pioneers arrived in a village the Catholic priests hastily ran to the police to instigate their arrest. But the pioneers persisted in preaching and proved themselves to be a real support and encouragement for the little groups.

LEGAL ORGANIZATION FORMED

Unquestionably, the opposers of the truth were not rejoicing, and they put forth vigorous efforts to get the publishers arrested and to expel the foreign pioneers. To give the organization a legal representation, a nonprofit corporation was established under the designation Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and it was registered with legal statutes in the Belgian official journal, *Le Moniteur Belge*, on May 7, 1932.

It was in that same year, 1932, immediately

preceding the declaring of 1933 to be a "holy year" by Pope Pius XI and the coming to power of the Nazi regime in Germany, that the Belgian brothers distributed over 196,000 books and booklets, more than double that of the preceding year.

FEARFUL CATHOLICS

The enemies continued their opposition without letup. Threats to expel the foreign pioneers and to arrest the publishers went hand in hand with the sermons of the Catholic priests, who stirred up their flocks against the proclaimers of God's Kingdom. The people were struck with fear. In the Catholic province of Limburg the countryfolk even thought Brother Wozniak to be the Devil himself and whenever they met up with him they would make the sign of the cross. To overcome this obstacle Brother Wozniak bought himself a black bowler hat, which gave him a very distinguished appearance. Now the people looked upon him as being a respectable gentleman. With what result? He then distributed an average of 10 books and 100 booklets daily.

INCREASED OPPOSITION

In the German-speaking part of Belgium, Nazi groups began forming and they started attacking Brothers Belflamme and Novak while these brothers were distributing magazines in the city of Eupen. One group of 12 young Nazis savagely tore away their magazine bags. The attacks became so ruthless and shameful that the police had to step in to protect the brothers.

Elsewhere the authorities forbade the foreign pioneers to preach the Kingdom, and several

pioneers were even expelled from the country. Now only 6 of the 26 pioneers who had reported in 1933 were left in the country. During 1934 appeals were made to King Leopold III, to the prime minister and to the minister of justice, but all in vain. Brother Wozniak, although hunted by the police, escaped expulsion. After a change in government took place, the minister of justice was replaced by a more liberal-minded man who granted Brother Wozniak permission to remain in Belgium.

IN THE ARDENNES

One day in 1934, in a village in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, two fleshly brothers, both Catholics, were discussing religion. "If there is nothing more than what the priests taught us," said one to the other, "we don't know anything about God." Then one of them added: "If only we had a Bible!" A few days later their wish was granted, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses knocked at their door. These two sincere seekers of truth were now in possession of God's Word.

Shortly thereafter one of them died, but the other one moved to Brussels and became another pillar for the Kingdom work in Belgium. This brother, Emile Schrantz, entered the pioneer service in 1936. Though patient and humble, he was dynamic in pursuing his ministerial career throughout the Dutch- and French-speaking parts of Belgium. During World War II, when the brothers were forced to go underground, he served as a zone servant, or circuit overseer as it is termed today. He was a man of faith and action, and today, in

spite of his age, he still serves as a special pioneer.

He began his traveling pioneer work in a section of Belgium known as the Ardennes, where he would travel on bicycle through this sparsely populated land of scattered towns and villages perched on the wooded hillsides and where the people lived in a superstitious fear of the priests. The police often stopped him, but he would not comply with their orders to quit the Kingdom-preaching work. After having been stopped several times one week in Bastogne, he was finally taken to the police station and ordered by the chief of police to cease his preaching work immediately. Brother Schrantz simply replied, "No." He never stopped preaching despite the many threats that reflected clergy opposition.

Encouragement was not easy to find. People would very rarely invite him indoors to listen to what he had to say. However, Jehovah proved to be his main source of encouragement. The only contact he had with the brothers was through letters he received from the Society, counseling him to follow the example of the prophets. When he felt discouraged, he would go to the edge of a wooded area and reread an article in *The Golden Age* on the prophets' lot and then he would take to the road again.

Thanks to his teaching them the Bible, a few

Brother Emile Schrantz, along with his wife, while in the circuit work (Brother Fevrier is on the right). Moving to the next congregation was done by bicycle

meek countryfolk in the Ardennes came to a knowledge of Jehovah and his truth. Today there are seven congregations serving the true God in this area.

THE "GREAT CROWD" BECOME MANIFEST

From 1935 onward, the "great crowd" started to make themselves manifest. These newly associated ones in Belgium showed the same zeal in Jehovah's service as did the anointed ones. They were happy with their privileges. Thus Brother J. F. Rutherford, while at the 1935 Washington, D.C., convention, explained that the place to which Jehovah assigns us is, without any doubt, the best. This very important talk was transmitted to Brussels, and the continual applause from those in attendance at Washington made even the brothers in Brussels, who did not understand En-



glish, realize that an important message was being conveyed to the ends of the earth.

Of the 13 congregations in Belgium at that time, there were 3 Polish ones located at Liège, Charleroi and Beringen, and 3 others were made up of German brothers and were located at Genk, Eisden and Roux. Another congregation of ten publishers was formed at Ieper (Ypres), a Flemish city that had been completely destroyed during World War I. In this Catholic city an assembly was held in 1936. The 50 brothers who gathered together rejoiced when they saw 55 brothers from France arriving to join them in the door-to-door work. Brothers Harbeck and Gertz from Switzerland were among the speakers present. Now there are 15 congregations in the territory where those first ten Witnesses of the Ieper Congregation once worked.

THE 1935 BRUSSELS WORLD'S FAIR

The Brussels World's Fair of 1935 helped tremendously to soften the attitude of the Belgian authorities toward the Kingdom work. Taking advantage of the World's Fair, the brothers set up a literature stand there. A huge sign with the words "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society" and "Jehovah's Witnesses" attracted the attention of thousands of visitors. Many persons came back a second time for literature, while still others went directly to the branch office to procure a whole series of books. Thousands of catalogs were distributed to passersby, some of whom said: "This is the best thing we've found at the whole fair!"

The priests were furious when they saw the

Society's literature stand at the World's Fair. One of them approached the brothers to ask if they had a license to sell their books there. Another one, taking the books in his hands, suddenly let them drop, as if he had been struck by lightning!

Books in 35 languages were also put on display in two large windows in the Graphic Arts Section. The Society was even awarded a silver medal in this section, but of great importance to the brothers was obtaining the legal right to preach the good news. Once again foreign pioneers could enter the country, and now their number increased to 14.

FEARLESS POLISH BROTHERS

At Charleroi courageous Polish brothers, who made a living by working in the coal mines, did much for the advancement of the work. Brothers François Brzoska, François Hankus, Albin Glowacz and Jean Radojewski, with the help of a German pioneer, did not hesitate to make known the Kingdom, in spite of their limited knowledge of the French language. Several courageous English pioneers, in particular Sisters Mona Pratt and Louie and Nancy Berry, Brother Ernest Senior and Brother and Sister Trinder, worked by their sides in accomplishing this most important Kingdom work.

CLERGY INFLUENCE LOSING ITS GRIP

After four years of legal struggles with the clergy-influenced police, the brothers noticed that the authorities adopted a more conciliatory attitude. For example, a pioneer, who had been accused by a Catholic mayor of going from door

Werner Schutz, a valiant fighter for the Theocracy. Up to his death in 1972, he had been in the full-time service for 47 years



to door without a license, had to appear before the judge. A lively discussion ensued between the judge and the mayor. It ended when the judge furiously pounded on the table, declaring: "I'm the judge here; this man is free because he's doing a good work. Or would you like me to take action against the Catholic nuns, too, when they go from door to door?"

TRANSCRIPTION MACHINES ON TRICYCLES

The brothers constructed two portable transcription machines. At Liège one of these machines, bought with the savings of Brothers Smets and Poelmans, was set up on a tricycle, which, with all its accessories and the battery, weighed 55 kilograms (120 lb). They would tour the marketplaces or stand in front of churches. The recorded talk could be heard several hundred feet away. Because of its weight, two brothers pulled the tricycle on which they would sometimes seat one or two of their children. They always kept an

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eye on the machine because at Visé some Catholic youths surrounded it, trying to topple it. In 1935 the brothers spent 27 days of 10 hours each doing this work. They distributed 369 booklets, 79 copies of *The Golden Age*, 7 books and one Bible among their 3,595 listeners.

A FAITHFUL EXAMPLE

During 1936 some new pioneers arrived in Belgium, one of whom was Werner Schutz from Switzerland. He had been assigned to France and served there until the police in Bar-le-Duc expelled him in 1935. He arrived at the Brussels office in January 1936. Now he had to learn a new language, Dutch, because he served in the Flemish city of Antwerp. At that time Brother Schutz was the only Witness in this city of more than 300,000 inhabitants, although this territory had already been partially worked by Brother Poelmans and the English sisters Nancy Berry and Jessie Whitmore.

The year 1936 was a noteworthy one for the Belgian brothers who were able to attend the convention in Lucerne, Switzerland, where Brother Rutherford gave a public talk in a hall protected by the police. Brother Schutz was in attendance at that convention but only after having traveled some 700 kilometers (430 mi) by bicycle from Antwerp to Lucerne.

Brother Schutz remained a valiant fighter for the Theocracy right up until his death in 1972, having served in the full-time ministry for 47 years. Even during the Nazi occupation he carried on his preaching activity and, along with Brothers

Wozniak, Schrantz and Hartstang, proved to be one of the principal pillars in expanding the work during that period of time.

WAR CLOUDS GATHER

In 1937 the threat of a second world war became more ominous. Exasperating nationalism, exploited by Catholicism, once again pressured the police to arrest the brothers. However, seeds of truth were springing up not only in Antwerp but everywhere in Flemish territory. In Ghent, birthplace of the Spanish emperor Charles V, the pioneers busied themselves in waving the Kingdom "banner" to the more than 160,000 inhabitants of this city who had never heard of the Kingdom truth. By the end of the 1937 service year 16 congregations had been organized for further activity in the country.

THEOCRATIC ORDER RESTORED

There was much rejoicing in 1938 when theocratic order was restored in the Christian congregations. However, a few elective elders, excellent public speakers, did not readily accept this divine arrangement. In one congregation in the Limburg province, several brothers still continued with the democratic method of electing elders. Brother Wozniak, however, helped them to get the correct viewpoint. Visited by three circuit overseers, the 20 congregations flourished. The 22 pioneers serving at that time flooded the country with Kingdom literature, and the 135 publishers working with them were better organized.

A RENEWED OUTBREAK OF NATIONALISM

Belgium had mobilized all its troops against imminent Nazi aggression. Once again the clergy took advantage of the rising fever of nationalism to hinder the declaration of the Kingdom good news. More and more frequently brothers were called in for questioning by the military authorities or by the Belgian police.

One day, at Braine-le-Comte, a sister left the magazine *Consolation* with a lady whose husband was in the army. The illustration on the cover showed Hitler riding a wild beast and trampling on mankind. When the husband arrived home and saw the picture of Hitler, he grabbed the magazine and went back to the barracks to warn the officers that Jehovah's Witnesses had passed by. That evening three officers arrested the brothers, accusing them of working as spies for Hitler. Though the brothers clearly explained matters, these military officers, blinded by Satan, refused to listen to them, telling them that they would be summoned before the court-martial for spying. The outbreak of war prevented these military authorities from carrying out their plans.

Despite clergy-instigated police threats, the work progressed well in the port city of Antwerp where Brothers Schrantz and Wozniak continued laying the foundation for the first congregation. Brother Schrantz was not intimidated by police superintendents who would say: "If you want to become a martyr, you'll end up in the rue des Béguines [the prison in Antwerp]." But Brother Schrantz did not end his Christian career in the rue des Béguines. Thanks to Jehovah's guidance

and protection, he is still in the pioneer service, notwithstanding the fact that the Nazis took him to this prison in 1940 for refusing to give them the address of his pioneer partner, Brother Wozniak.

In the Limburg province, the brothers saw a Catholic priest indicating to a police officer the block where the Witnesses were busy preaching the good news. Brother Vincent Golic and his companions were stopped and threatened with long prison terms if they continued preaching from house to house.

In the French-speaking part of Belgium the same opposition came directly from the priests, who resented the pioneers' intrusion into their "pastures." They used every means at their disposal to get rid of them, such as warning their flocks, threatening the pioneers, calling out the State Police, sending children to pester the brothers, throwing stones or puncturing the tires on the brothers' bicycles and going around after them to collect the literature they had distributed. Nevertheless, villagers would often say to them: "Give me several of your booklets; when the priest comes, I can give him one to satisfy him and keep the rest to read!"

At Ciney a Catholic monk of the Order of the White Fathers greatly opposed Mona Pratt and her partner, ordering them to cease their activity immediately. The two Witnesses replied that God had ordained them for this Kingdom work. "I am in holy orders," retorted the monk, "and I can release you from that God-given ordination."

The two pioneer sisters took their bicycles and courageously continued on to the next village,

distributing copies of the booklet entitled *Universal War Near* to the people. The priest followed them, asking all the countryfolk to give him the booklets. He managed to gather a few because, in many places, where two booklets had been left, the people gave him back only one booklet. He then approached the sisters with the few booklets that he had recovered, telling them that now he was going to make a huge bonfire. This did not hinder the truth from taking root. Today there are thriving congregations in Dinant, Namur and Ciney, where these English pioneers had preached the Word of Jehovah.

UNPRECEDENTED PREWAR WITNESS

An unprecedented witness had been given before the Nazi invasion of Belgium. By 1939 a peak of 218 publishers and 33 pioneers had been progressively trained in the Kingdom ministry, and theocratic service arrangements had been restored. During the 11 years preceding World War II, they were able to cover a good portion of the country, distributing nearly 1,500,000 pieces of literature. Eleven new congregations had been formed in 1939, making a total of 31 congregations. But what would become of this well-planted field during the years of Nazi occupation?

BAN . . . WAR!

Even before the arrival of Hitler's hordes, the first assaults against the Kingdom work began. On March 30, 1940, the Home Secretary announced that all the Society's literature was banned. The pretext for this was that it had a disastrous effect upon the minds of the soldiers and of the pop-

ulation. The Belgian government, however, was never able to enforce that law because scarcely two months later the Nazis arrived, and they were the ones who enforced this decree.

On May 10, 1940, Belgium was once again transformed into a battlefield. The English pioneers wondered what they should do now. They awaited instructions from the branch office, but upon making inquiries they found that the new branch overseer had disappeared. Following the advice of their Consulate, they returned to England, with the exception of Sister Pratt. She carried on her preaching work underground, as did Brother François Brzoska who was of Polish descent and who later became her husband.

When witnessing during the war, Sister Brzoska once entered, unsuspectingly, the store of a Nazi agent. It was only when she noticed a huge portrait of Hitler that she realized the danger she was facing. It was too late to turn back now, for the Nazi was standing there in front of her. She offered him a New Testament, saying that it contained the hope of a new order of things where peace and everlasting life will reign.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "I believe in a new order of things and I know," pointing to the picture of Hitler, "that he's busy establishing it to last for a thousand years. Of course, we don't know how much time it will take to establish it because there is a brood that must be completely exterminated first."

Sister Brzoska answered, saying he no doubt had the Jews in mind. "No," he replied, "the En-

glish!" He had an intense hatred for the English, and while observing the sister, who had an accent since she was of English descent, he inquired: "What is your nationality?"

Sister Brzoska replied, "Polish." (Obviously, by marriage.) "Good," he said, "but you won't get anywhere until all the English have been exterminated, and if I could only get hold of an Englishman, I'd take great delight in personally exterminating him for the good of all mankind." One can imagine how our sister's knees were knocking, but what a relief for her when this man accepted not only one but two New Testaments, one of which was for a friend. He never realized that he had perhaps been the closest ever to the opportunity of exterminating one of the 'English brood.'

1940—UNDER NAZI OPPRESSION

Jehovah was preparing his people to face unrelenting oppression from the Nazi "king of the north." (Dan. 11:40) Thus the brothers were strengthened in their exclusive devotion to Jehovah by the study of the article on neutrality, appearing in *The Watchtower* (French edition) of January 1940. This came in the nick of time, just before the Nazi invasion. The booklet *Fascism or Freedom* also had just been shipped out to the congregations.

Upon the arrival of Hitler's troops, the brothers thought that the battle of Armageddon had begun. Fearing to be discovered by the Nazis as being in possession of these booklets, some brothers started distributing them. For example, in the region of Charleroi, Brother Albin Glowacz had received

20 cartons just 15 days before the outbreak of war, and he began distributing the booklets in the letter boxes. Others distributed them to refugees fleeing toward France, while in Liège they were handed out to passersby on the street.

Since no instructions were forthcoming from the Society's office in Brussels, Brother Wozniak made arrangements to keep the work alive. He got in touch with the brothers and reassured them that Armageddon had not yet begun and persuaded them to stop distributing the publications free of cost. "Keep them," he said, "you will need them," and he encouraged the brothers to hide the literature for the work yet to be done.

At the branch office the publications were sealed up in the walls or hidden under the floorboards. This was done so well that when Hitler's soldiers came to search the office in October 1940, they found nothing. Later the publications were transferred to more secure hiding places. For example, Brother and Sister Coenen used a handcart, and with extreme caution they transported most of these publications without being intercepted, doing so on six separate trips. Brother Michiels helped Brother Floryn hide 500 books and 4,000 booklets on the ground floor of his house, which served as a store, all hidden from sight behind the shelves. Unfortunately, the Gestapo succeeded in discovering this stock when they arrested Brother Floryn in June 1941. He was subsequently deported to the Nazi concentration camps. In view of the scarcity of literature, the publications were no longer left for contributions but were loaned out, thus enabling a greater number to benefit from them.

Satan seemed to have considerably weakened the Kingdom work in Belgium. He was certainly displeased to see that in 1940 there was a peak of 275 publishers, including 34 pioneers, announcing the Kingdom. Taking advantage of the closing down of the branch and using his totalitarian hordes, he spread fear and panic among the congregations. In Brussels, for example, more than 50 percent of the brothers became inactive. Only a small nucleus of publishers continued to put the Kingdom first in their lives during this difficult period. In 1941 there were only 86 publishers still active, and 14 congregations were no longer functioning. But Satan's jubilation was to be short-lived.

UNDERGROUND REORGANIZATION

Jehovah's spirit moved the brothers to see the need to reorganize in order to go ahead with the preaching work underground. Brother Wozniak, circuit overseer, spoke about this to the branch overseer, who took no initiative because he had been warned by the Gestapo and felt that he was being watched. The secret meeting of the overseers that he had planned did not take place, and so Brother Wozniak asked the brother directing the underground work in Holland to take over also in Belgium.

At that time it was Brother Winkler who was directing the work in Holland, and he appointed Brother Hartstang, a brother who had much experience in underground work, to go to Belgium in July 1941 to assume the weighty responsibility of reorganizing the work.

OBTAINING AND REPRODUCING THE WATCHTOWER

The brothers in Belgium, however, did not await the arrival of Brother Hartstang before making arrangements to obtain spiritual food. First of all, it was necessary to obtain a copy of each *Watchtower* in order to translate it and provide copies for the brothers. A brother volunteered to go regularly to Holland to procure a copy. He took the saddle off his bicycle and slipped a rolled-up *Watchtower* into the hollow frame, put the saddle back in place and crossed the border.

Once in possession of a manuscript, Brother Wozniak had it translated into Polish, German and French. To produce a sufficient number of *Watchtower* magazines, materials for mimeographing were needed. Even typewriters were scarce; indeed, they were precious. In Antwerp a spiritually weak brother possessed one that had been used for some time to type letters and other directions concerning the reorganization of the work. Since this brother kept up connections with a sect issuing from the "evil slave" class, it became necessary to avoid this person, but the typewriter was needed. What could be done?

Brothers Floryn and Wozniak went to this person and proposed buying the typewriter, but he refused. How could he be persuaded to sell it? Not being whole-souled for Jehovah and His organization, the man lacked the fearlessness and courage of His faithful servants. Thus Brother Floryn remarked that the typewriter had already been used to produce underground texts, and since each typewriter has its own particular form of

characters, it would not be difficult for the Gestapo to identify this one as having been used to write these texts. So it would be a source of constant danger for the owner. Now he accepted the brothers' offer to buy the typewriter, happy to get rid of it!

PRODUCING LITERATURE UNDERGROUND

In the mining district of Limburg there was a small group of foreign brothers. It became a center for producing printed matter underground. The Golic and Pajk families, among others, used their homes to that end. There they translated *The Watchtower* into German, Dutch, Italian, Polish and Slovenian. Then they made carbon copies with old typewriters. To muffle the sound of the typewriters, the Pajk family put heavy blankets over the windows, whereas the Golic family installed double windowpanes. This did not keep the neighbors from suspecting some underground activity, since the brothers were frequently coming to pick up literature. No one gave them away, however, because the Belgians considered everything that was underground to be hostile to the hated Nazi regime. These brothers even printed the book *Children* in Slovenian.

UNDERGROUND HEADQUARTERS

One of the most important centers for producing literature underground was at Ougrée, near Liège, at the home of the Doyen family. One might say that it was the underground Bethel. The equipment consisted of two typewriters and a duplicator. The place hummed with activity.

Brother and Sister Hartstang worked and lived there most of the time.

There was also Brother Fritz Schneider, of German nationality; he was the printer. At times Brother Werner Schutz was there, translating either from German to French or from Dutch to French. These two brothers were housed nearby. The *Informant* (now *Our Kingdom Ministry*) and even the book *Children* were printed in Polish here at the Doyen home.

Another fact worthy of mention concerning the Doyen family is that the father was not in the truth, and a son was a prisoner of war. Two other sons were designated to be deported to Germany as forced laborers. If they refused to be deported and went into hiding, the home would be continually watched by German soldiers and could no longer serve as underground headquarters for the production of Bible literature. Although only one was interested in the truth, the two sons agreed to be deported so that their home could continue to be used for the work.

One may wonder how such intense activity could possibly have gone unnoticed by the neighbors, for it was a beehive. Sometimes brothers arrived or left carrying as many as four suitcases or packages. However, as was the case at the other center in Limburg, there was complete silence among the neighbors; they also considered it a form of resistance to the Nazi invaders.

EVADING THE OPPOSERS

To throw the enemy off his trail, Brother Hartstang traveled around from time to time, vis-

iting the brothers or even going to France. In fact, for a time, Brother Hartstang secretly crossed the French border every fortnight to get the English edition of *The Watchtower*, which reached France via Switzerland. Needless to say, these were trying times for Sister Hartstang who never knew if her husband would return.

WORLDLY PRINTERS COOPERATE

Sometimes Brother Hartstang stayed in Brussels at the home of Brother Ista. This brother was a great help in providing the brothers with spiritual food. He got in touch with a printer in Brussels, Mr. De Prince of the Erasme printing shop, and near the end of the Nazi occupation this man agreed to do underground printing for us. Not only was *The Watchtower* printed but so were 6,000 copies of the book *Children*.

Due to the fact that the preaching work was less developed in the Flemish territory than in the Walloon territory, there was a scarcity of literature in Dutch. Brother Wozniak succeeded in having 10,000 copies of the booklet *Choosing* printed in Dutch by a Charleroi printer who did the work, not because he favored the Witnesses, but because he was fiercely opposed to the Germans.

A RISKY OPERATION

Publications were even sent secretly by boat from Holland to Belgium. A Dutch brother owned a boat called *Lichtdrager*. He hid literature in his boat and unloaded it at Bree in Limburg and in the district of Kortrijk. Brothers went by bicycle to the place where the literature was unloaded and took the cartons to their homes.

All of this, of course, was not without great risk. One day a brother who was transporting a carton of the book *Children* was stopped by a German patrol tracking down black-market smugglers. Seeing the contents of the carton, the soldier cried out: "Oh, it's for children!" and let the brother pass.

Another boat, *Dolphijs*, was also used, crossing the Belgo-Hollandish frontier five times with publications.

TRANSPORTING LITERATURE

If the production of underground literature created a problem, getting it to all parts of the country created another. There was no thought of using railroads or the mail, for these were all under military control. Furthermore, the brothers could not use an automobile, since gasoline was scarce. There was the bicycle, and even then there was the problem of tires; they were simply not to be found. The brothers in Limburg became specialists in making bicycle tires out of old auto tires. They were not very flexible, but the main thing was being able to get about.

Brothers who transported literature were so heavily loaded that it was difficult to go unnoticed. Furthermore, they risked being taken for black-market smugglers. Yet they carried on courageously, Brothers Wozniak, Schrantz, Floryn and Schutz being especially used for this service.

JEHOVAH'S PROTECTION

One day near Mechelen, Brother Schrantz' bicycle was so heavily loaded with literature that

he lost his balance, falling over right in front of a German soldier. The soldier helped him get up and even put his literature back on the bicycle; then he wished him a pleasant journey. In order to furnish their brothers with publications, these brothers often traveled 110 or 160 kilometers (70 or 100 miles) heavily loaded and poorly fed.

Once Brother Schutz made a literature-carrying trip toward Charleroi, but he did not arrive at his destination. After several days Brother E. Heuse, Sr., and Brother Schrantz became worried and started looking for him. Finally, they found him in a nursing home in Liège. He had been wounded in a bombardment near Val St. Lambert. He did not seem to be affected by his experience; on the contrary, he had not been so well fed for a long time! There was only one thing that worried him: Where was his bicycle with the literature?

The brothers started hunting around and finally found the bicycle and its precious load in a Catholic institution. The nuns had taken good care of everything, and they handed it all back, without suspecting what was in the baggage!

Sometimes the weather was so bad that it was necessary to travel by train—despite the risk of inspections by the *Feldgendarmes* (German military police) and the Gestapo. One day Brother Schutz got caught in an inspection on the train. He was carrying two heavy suitcases. One was full of literature and the other was full of coal that the brothers working in the mines had given him. What a relief to the brother when the soldiers decided to look into the suitcase containing

the coal! Upon seeing the contents, they burst out laughing and went on their way. Another time, a Gestapo agent had him open a suitcase containing literature. After glancing at the contents and seeing the expression "Adam and Eve," the Gestapo agent exclaimed: "Go on your way with that rubbish!" He did. Brother Schutz who was of Swiss nationality was less likely to be suspected by the Germans.

The sisters were also less likely to be suspected than the brothers. It was for this reason that Sister Marie Smets served as liaison between Liège and Namur, traveling either by cycle or by train, according to the weather, but always heavily loaded. One day she got to the railroad station carrying heavy suitcases and with bicycle tires draped around her neck—but the train did not come. After she had waited for two hours the arrival of a German military train was announced, and civilians were authorized to get aboard. It was thus that she made the trip on a military train, loaded down with underground literature and arrived without mishap at the home of Brother Fevrier in Namur at five o'clock in the morning.

FEARLESS YOUNG BROTHERS

Young brothers were used too for transporting literature; they also displayed Christian courage. Brother Ernest Heuse, Jr., made a train trip from Liège to Verviers when he was about 16 years old. He tells of his experience: "Only a few minutes after departure, the *Feldgendarmes* boarded the train. There were six of them. They shouted, 'Hands up!' Everyone obeyed. They seemed to be

looking for someone, and the first one pointed his finger at me. They ordered me to stand up; I thought that someone had denounced me. One of them was behind me with his pistol in my back, another in front of me and a third at my side. They asked for my identification papers, but as I made the move to take them out of my pocket, one of them hit my hand and took the wallet out himself. They searched me from head to toe. When they left I had the impression that they had forgotten something.

"An elderly man sitting across from me remarked that the police had forgotten to check my luggage. It was only then that I remembered that I had luggage along with me. If I had been thinking of the luggage while they were searching me, I might have become nervous, because I was transporting some duplicated copies of *The Watchtower* dealing with Daniel's prophecy concerning the king of the north and the king of the south, as well as some booklets, one being entitled *Fascism or Freedom*. The elderly man thought that they did not check my baggage because the three who were checking all the luggage must have figured that the three checking my personal papers had already done so and thus just passed on. But I personally felt that it was Jehovah's protection."

CONTACT WITH THE BRANCH OFFICE

One may wonder how the publications were distributed to the congregations. Let us see how that took place in one of the centers, for example, at the home of Brother Fevrier. He received the literature wrapped up in small packages bearing no

indication except a number. The congregation for which the package was intended sent a messenger to pick it up, this often being at night. The messenger simply said: "I want parcel number 22." Once in possession of the package, the messenger left rapidly without saying another word.

Field service reports were collected in the following manner: Each congregation was identified by a letter whereas the individual publisher had a number. The congregation was divided up into study groups composed of from eight to ten persons who knew only the one responsible for the study, often not knowing even his name or his address. This brother collected the reports and transmitted them to the congregation's presiding overseer, who was known only to those responsible for the study groups.

Once the total report was completed, it was a matter of waiting for the circuit overseer, who was the liaison between the congregations and the underground Bethel. He collected the reports as well as noting the congregation's needs for copies of *The Watchtower* and the *Informant* (now *Our Kingdom Ministry*). He recorded the service report in a secret code, so that if he should be searched it would be impossible for an outsider to understand it.

MEETINGS DURING THE OCCUPATION

Each one understood the importance of meeting together for mutual encouragement. The brothers met in small groups in private homes. Many precautions had to be taken: (1) The brothers could not arrive together; the arrivals and departures

were spaced out so as not to attract attention. (2) The meeting places were changed each week and, if possible, so were the day and time. Consequently it was necessary to be present at each meeting in order to know where the next meeting would be held. Needless to say, no one could take the initiative to bring someone along to the meeting for the first time; the person had to be tested first as to his sincerity. (3) In times of great danger, the meeting was held as though it were a family reunion. For example, the table was set for a family meal. If something unexpected happened, it was just a matter of getting the study material out of sight and staying at the table as if waiting for the meal. This arrangement dispelled any suspicions about a gathering of ten persons.

The study material was appropriate for the times. It consisted of Bible accounts having prophetic significance for God's people of today. Among them can be mentioned the accounts concerning Ehud, Barak, Deborah, Jephthah and Daniel. Sometimes these studies, such as that of Micah's prophecies, continued over a period of several months. This rich spiritual food was just what was needed to equip the brothers for their fight against the politico-religious elements that were trying to exterminate them, even as had been foretold by these historical and prophetic accounts.

THE GESTAPO SEARCHES FOR BROTHER WOZNAK

Long before 1940 the Nazi regime had shown its ferocious opposition to Jehovah's Witnesses in its efforts to destroy them. It is, therefore, easy to

understand why these agents of death, as soon as they entered Belgium, began to try to destroy the work of the Witnesses. Their main targets were those who were fearless and very active. The man they particularly wanted to eliminate was Brother André Wozniak, who was pioneering in Antwerp at that time with Brother Schrantz.

One day while Brother Wozniak was away visiting the congregations, strengthening them and helping them to get organized, the Gestapo came to search his rooms. It was Brother Schrantz who was taken away to be questioned. During the interrogation, extreme caution had to be exercised so as not to betray his partner. For example, while being questioned, he was handed a list of names of brothers and he was asked if he knew them. He replied by saying he knew some, choosing those who were either dead or who had left the country. When asked where his friend was, he replied: "He has gone to visit his relatives, but we don't interest ourselves in each other's affairs; that is the only way to avoid problems between friends." The Gestapo agent agreed, saying it was the best thing to do. The brother was released after 40 days in prison, the agents probably hoping that he would eventually lead them to Brother Wozniak. To put them off the track, however, Brother Schrantz changed his territory and went off to the Ardennes.

TRAPPED BY THE GESTAPO

Some time afterward Brother Wozniak lived through an unforgettable experience. Let him tell it himself: "It was the beginning of June 1941.

To strengthen the brothers living near Charleroi, I went there by bicycle, arriving at the home of Brother Hankus at Couillet to stay for the night. It had been arranged that in case of danger I should go up to the attic and from there to the roof and escape by passing from one house to another.

"At seven the next morning I was awakened by the words, 'Open up!' I looked out the window and saw three men in civilian clothes—it was the Gestapo! Half dressed, trousers and jacket on my arm, I hurriedly climbed the stairway leading to the attic. I hid myself as best I could between the roof and the false ceiling of the attic. It was in the nick of time because the Gestapo agents were soon in the attic. Seeing nobody, they went downstairs and asked Brother Hankus where I was. As he gave no reply, they started to beat him. My heart was pounding so strongly that it seemed to me to be audible.

"I prayed to Jehovah for them to be blinded. Unbelievable but true, they searched the entire house from the cellar to the attic, accompanied by Brother Hankus, without their ever seeing me! Finally, they found my bicycle and my bag, and they gave Brother Hankus a terrible beating, but he stayed strong and did not give me away. Then two of the agents took the brother off to prison.

"The other agent stayed in the house, revolver at the ready, guarding Sister Hankus. Every two hours the guard was changed. As for me, I was under the tiles; it was hot and I was hungry and especially thirsty. Around midday I heard a voice saying softly: 'Come down now, they've gone!' I

almost left my hideout to go downstairs, since everything was so quiet, but decided to stay put. Later on, the sister told me that it had been the voice of the agent, trying to trick me into giving myself away."

ESCAPE AT LAST

Darkness fell, and Brother Wozniak became extremely thirsty. He relates: "I was also very tired and afraid of falling asleep because I was a heavy sleeper and often snored noisily. In my uncomfortable position, to go to sleep and snore would have led to my discovery. To keep awake, I kept pricking myself with a pin until I bled; but finally I felt my strength leaving me and I thought all was lost.

"Around midnight the sister was allowed to go to bed. She managed to bring me some bread and water, and I told her of my plan to escape. From her bedroom window I got onto the flat roof and then let myself slide down the drainpipe. Finally, after a 12-foot jump, I landed in the garden. It was impossible to go any farther then, because I would have been stopped by a patrol. So I hid while awaiting daybreak.

"In the morning I saw a woman in her garden. As I asked her for some water I could see fear written all over her face. However, she got me some water, some soap and a razor. As I was barefoot, I asked her to buy me a pair of slippers. Next, an interested person came and informed me that the Gestapo had finally left that morning at seven, taking my bicycle with them. But I was given Brother Hankus' cycle in place of mine, and



André Wozniak, a keyman in carrying on the Kingdom work underground during World War II, was sought—but never caught—by the Gestapo

off I went like a shot to Brother Brzoska's home, where I received a book bag and a Bible. After sleeping a day and a night, off I went to the next congregation."

SUDDEN CHANGE IN PLANS

When Brother Wozniak arrived there, he went to the home of Brother Albin Glowacz to stay during the visit. "It had been arranged that I stay a week with him," said Brother Wozniak, "but I couldn't get to sleep that night; I just tossed and turned." A change in plans came to mind, as he relates: "At breakfast, I told the brother that I intended leaving that same day for Carnières, the next congregation to be visited. He tried to get me to change my mind, even mentioning the good food available, wheat bread and butter, something really inviting at the time. However, nothing could make me change my mind, and I left for Carnières.

"The next day I was horrified to learn that the Gestapo had arrived that same morning at the home of Brother Glowacz and had taken him off

to prison, with the concentration camps as the final destination! How glad I was that I had not allowed myself to be tempted with the good bread and butter! One thing was certain: Gestapo agents were at my heels. I would have to try to put them off the track.

"I returned to Antwerp, but there I learned that our room had been put under seal, that the homeowner's wife, interested in the truth, had been taken away by the Gestapo and that the proprietor was obliged to denounce me to the Gestapo as soon as I arrived. Things were getting worse there too; it was necessary to leave Antwerp immediately.

"So I left for Limburg to visit the congregations. Two hours after my departure from Waterschei where I had stayed, the Gestapo broke into the house and searched everywhere. The situation was worsening fast. They were out to get me, apparently guided by the demons."

BROTHER FLORYN FALLS INTO A TRAP

The same day that Brother Wozniak left, after Brother Hankus' arrest, Brother Floryn, who was the contact man, arrived by bicycle at Brother Hankus' home with 400 booklets and 24 books. It was June 7, 1941. Because her husband had just been arrested, Sister Hankus begged the brother to leave as soon as possible. He left, taking Brother Wozniak's shoes with him to leave them elsewhere. He should have continued on to Brother Glowacz' home, but, in view of these events, he returned to his home in Brussels the same day, tired out.

Arriving home, he learned that the Gestapo

had searched the house and had taken away all the publications that had been hidden: 20 Bibles, 500 books and 4,000 booklets. His wife and parents-in-law had been kept under guard all day. He had fallen into the trap. At five the next morning the Gestapo turned up and took him away, handcuffed. He went off to prison and then on to the German concentration camps until the end of the war. His wife was to join him a year later, having to leave their two small children in the care of her parents.

INTENSIFIED GESTAPO ACTIVITY

It was at this time that a Gestapo chief, who had arrested many Witnesses in Germany, took up his duties in Belgium. It was soon after his arrival in Brussels that these arrests took place and the search for Brother Wozniak intensified. Among those arrested were Brothers Midi, Schockaert, Michiels, Coenen and Martin (the previous branch overseer), and Sisters Michiels and Coenen.

As for Brother Hankus, after his arrest by the Gestapo for concealing Brother Wozniak in his home, he was beaten and knocked unconscious by Hitler's agents because he refused to disclose the names of the brothers. On July 6, 1941, he was transferred to St. Gilles Prison in Brussels. In spite of enduring torture, Brother Hankus refused to divulge names. He was then taken to Louvain Central Prison, and from there the Nazis led him to their extermination camps. When, at the end of the war, he was released from the concentration camp, he served as congregation overseer for many years.

BRANCH REORGANIZATION DESPITE DANGERS

A month after that series of arrests, Brother Hartstang arrived secretly from Holland in order to reorganize the preaching work. At the home of a sister in Antwerp, he held a private meeting with the three circuit overseers and two brothers who looked after the contacts. This sister lived alone on the ground floor, and on this occasion these six brothers came to within a hairbreadth of being arrested by the Gestapo. How was that?

During the meeting the bell rang, and who stood there? Three Gestapo agents! They inquired about a Jew and his son who were supposed to be living on the second floor. The sister told them that the Jews had fled at the outbreak of war. One of the agents now stood guard at the entrance while the other two searched every corner of the upstairs and attic.

Meanwhile, the brothers prayed that Jehovah might blind the eyes of the enemy. Had they been discovered it would have meant that all the principal overseers in Belgium would have been arrested in one swoop. But Jehovah did not permit that. The Gestapo departed, and so did the brothers, one by one, never to return to that home. Two weeks later the Gestapo returned unexpectedly, and this time they searched the entire house.

ENEMY EFFORTS TO HUNT DOWN BROTHER HARTSTANG

Although Brother Hartstang came alone at the outset of his stay in Belgium, his wife joined him six months later. She arrived in the same manner:

by cycle along the unbeaten country roads of the Belgo-Hollandish border. She was by his side all through the war, except when he had to make especially dangerous trips.

In no time at all, the Gestapo found out about Brother Hartstang's presence in Belgium and started to hunt him down. The enemy had obtained information about the general whereabouts of the brother and his wife through a confiscated letter. Equipped with large photographs of the couple, the Gestapo searched everywhere, just as is done when trying to capture a dangerous criminal. But the brother and his wife always escaped the traps set for them, sometimes only in the nick of time. Yes, somehow they were kept safe.

Interestingly, the chief of the Gestapo who was previously mentioned as initiating heavy persecution of the Witnesses, and who was determined to trap Brother Hartstang, was sitting by the window of his office one day and heard the drone of an airplane engine. Thinking it was a German plane, he took no precautions. Suddenly the plane's machine guns opened fire and the Gestapo chief was hit and killed. The airplane happened to be British, piloted by a Belgian.

THE ENEMY IS BLINDED

Many experiences show that the enemy can be blinded by Jehovah's angels. For example, Sisters Michelic and Golic had been entrusted with the job of delivering a letter from Limburg to Holland, destined for the brother in charge of the work in that land. This had to be done under cover. Sister Golic put the letter inside her purse

and off they went to Holland, taking the country roads. They were intercepted by customs officers and searched. First of all, they searched Sister Michelic, and, among other things, they looked through her purse. It just so happened that Sisters Golic and Michelic had identical purses. When it was Sister Golic's turn, the officer took her purse. Returning it to her immediately, he said: "Oh, I have already looked at that!" Thus she got back her purse, which contained the precious letter!

On another occasion, at Namur, Brother Fevrier was helping Brother Schutz carry his heavy baggage to the station. At Montagne-Sainte-Barbe they were stopped by a German control. It was impossible to turn back. Brother Schutz said to Brother Fevrier: "Make believe that we are not together; perhaps one of us will escape!"

Brother Fevrier lagged behind. Brother Schutz went through the control without difficulty, probably because of his Swiss passport. Then it was Brother Fevrier's turn, and he handed over his identity papers. He was carrying an *Ausweis* (free pass for after dark) delivered by the occupational forces to the railroad staff. The soldier was satisfied. However, he asked the brother to open his baggage, in which there was a *Watchtower* study article about the war between the Nazi king of the north and the democratic king of the south, of Daniel's prophecy. As Nehemiah had done, the brother prayed in silence. (Neh. 2:4) He bent over to open up the baggage. At that very moment a truck arrived; the soldier rushed over to bar its passage, forgetting the brother, who quietly slipped away, heaving a sigh of relief.

At Ougrée, Brother Armand Hebrant came back from a visit made at the home of Brother Heuse. In his pocket he was carrying three identification cards with false names. One card was for Brother Hartstang, who was working underground, and another for Brother Schrantz, circuit overseer. Brother Hebrant was stopped by a patrol on the bridge that crosses the Meuse, and there he was systematically searched, even down to his socks.

All his jacket pockets were searched, as well as an inside pocket of his overcoat. Each time the soldier felt on the side where the cards were located, by error he took the jacket and the overcoat together and plunged his hand into the inside pocket of the jacket. However, when the soldier went over the brother's clothing outside the overcoat, the brother himself could very clearly feel the documents. Many times the soldier repeated the same movements and each time he forgot that pocket, as if some unseen hand was holding him back. The three cards bore the pictures of three brothers, but with false names, of course, and the brother would have been unable to justify having these identification cards on him.

STRATEGY TOO

Brother Gheys tells how he had to use strategy to forestall the enemy. After visiting some interested people, he was stopped during the night by a German patrol. A soldier stuck his rifle in the brother's back while another shone his flashlight right in his face. They asked for his identification papers. To get them, he had to hold his briefcase between his knees. Then they started to search

him. To facilitate their job, but also by strategy, he raised his arms in the air, holding his briefcase in one hand. The soldier carefully examined his clothing but forgot to look in his briefcase that contained literature!

UNDER ANGELS' WINGS

At times it was evident that events were being directed in order to protect the brothers. One day Brother Hartstang was returning to his secret lodgings at Ougrée by trolley, which he normally took right to the terminus. Suddenly he thought of getting off before reaching the terminus so that he could stretch his legs since he was often confined indoors. Arriving at his destination, he found everyone as white as a sheet. The German soldiers had organized a strict control at the terminus and the family feared the worst as regards the brother. Unwittingly, he had escaped the trap.

At his lodgings, in addition to secret printing materials, there were publications in the process of being printed. A neighbor lived in the same courtyard. He was elderly and deaf and never got up before eight or nine. One morning he got up at about four. No one ever found out why. Anyway, he went out into the courtyard to get a breath of fresh air. At that time a German patrol arrived, brandishing revolvers.

It was a raid following a sudden strike by the workers at the Cockerill factory. The strike was precipitated by the deportation of 500 workmen. The Germans had the address of one of the leaders of the strike, and they were looking for him. They asked the old man where this person lived.



Brother and Sister Hartstang arrived secretly from Holland. He served as branch overseer during those difficult times and eluded being captured by a determined Gestapo chief

As unbelievable as it may seem, this deaf old man understood what the soldiers were asking and pointed out the place where the hunted man lived on the next road. If that man had not been there at that unusual hour, the soldiers would have penetrated farther into the courtyard, and, as was their custom, would have pounded on the door. It is easy to imagine what would have then gone on inside, the search that the soldiers would have made, discovering this "jackpot." But Jehovah was watching.

The place used for printing the publications was also Brother and Sister Hartstang's bedroom. Previously it had been a pigsty, and from the outside it still looked like one. Usually Brother and Sister Hartstang got up between six-thirty and seven and then studied the daily text. But one particular day they had difficulty in waking up, and this fact worked for their protection. What was going on outside?

In the early morning the German soldiers had encircled the whole area and were systematically



François Hankus, among the 14 brothers and sisters taken to different prisons and concentration camps in Germany

couple wake up, in spite of all the noise outside. If they had awakened, it probably would have led to their arrest. It is easy to imagine what their instinctive reaction would have been: They would have tried to escape by another door and would have been caught in the trap. Happily, Jehovah's angels caused them to keep on sleeping soundly, and they avoided any spontaneous and perhaps disastrous consequences. It was only after the departure of the soldiers that they learned what had taken place.

COURAGE NEEDED

Brother Schutz had another typical experience. At Tournai he was arrested by the Walloon Guard, that is to say, Belgians working for the Gestapo. His identity papers were not in order, so he was taken to headquarters to be examined and then on to the Tournai prison. After being questioned, he was told to go home and have his papers put in order by the local authorities. His suitcase, which contained a quantity of the booklet *Fascism or Freedom*, had to be left behind at headquarters.

He went to Kortrijk, put his papers in order and then returned to Tournai to show them and pick up his suitcase. Courage was needed to do that when one thinks what could have happened in the meantime in view of what the suitcase contained. All went well and his case was returned to him. It certainly appeared to be angelic intervention that the enemy did not open the suitcase.

ENDURANCE TO THE END

Not all the brothers escaped from the clutches of the Nazis. Fourteen brothers and sisters were

searching every home, looking perhaps for Brother Hartstang. On this second occasion, they knocked at the door of the elderly deaf man mentioned previously, shouting loudly as they usually did, and this only about two meters (6.5 ft) away from Brother and Sister Hartstang! But the soldiers did not knock at the "pigsty" door nor did the

Sister Hankus endured faithfully and remained active during the detention of her husband and afterward, serving until her death in 1982



Brother and Sister
Floryn after they
returned from
the concentration
camps



arrested and underwent severe treatment while being questioned in true Gestapo style. Some were released after a few weeks or a few months. Seven, including two sisters, were deported and sent to concentration camps or prison. Brother Alphonse Midi died in prison, and Brother Lodewijk Schockaert was killed.

Brother Midi had been sentenced to 55 months in prison because of so-called propaganda against Germany, having been found possessing copies of the booklets *Fascism or Freedom*. He died in 1943 in the prison of Hagen, as a result of gangrene

that set in because of a neglected injury. He died in his cell, abandoned by his jailers who brought him no medical aid.

Brother Schockaert had been a communist before accepting the truth. The Nazis arrested him, accusing him of being a communist. As soon as he arrived at the Sachsenhausen camp in Germany he went to the SS camp commander to tell him that he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, not a communist. He received a purple triangle, the identification mark of Jehovah's Witnesses in the camp. In 1943, while being transferred to another camp, this brother was shot by SS soldiers.

As for Brother Hankus, he died in 1954 as a result of the bad treatment he had received during the war. His wife endured faithfully and remained active during all those war years and until her death on May 16, 1982.

SS EFFORTS TO BREAK CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY

When a Witness was arrested, the scenario was always the same. First of all there was a questioning in SS style. By temptation, by cunning or by brutality the SS tried to make the Witness divulge the names of other Witnesses and then to deny his faith.

Brother Glowacz had the following experience. After his arrest he was questioned in the office of the SS. Before him on a table were a nice loaf of white bread, some sausage and pears. If the Witness was ready to talk, he would be able to eat to his heart's content. If not, the worst treatment would be inflicted on him. When Broth-

er Glowacz told the questioner that he would act according to the principle stated by the apostle Peter in Acts 5:29: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men," the Nazi became white with rage and shouted, "All right, you will go to prison until your beard is as long as that of the apostle Peter!" And that is what happened. The brother stayed in prison for nine months, without being allowed to shave.

LIFE IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Brothers Hankus, Michiels, Floryn and Glowacz were taken to different prisons and concentration camps, one of which was situated near Strasbourg. There, for the least little thing they were beaten incessantly, either with a stick or with a whip. The SS called the Witnesses dogs from heaven. Food was reduced to a strict minimum. Yet they were required to do the strenuous work of widening roads, using the most primitive tools. Included in this work was the loading of small wagons with stones and then pushing the wagons along the rails to the required position. Sometimes a wagon went off the rails and the *Kommando-Führer* (chief of a group of guards) would keep the other prisoners at a distance while forcing just the four brothers to put the wagon back on the rails—that in spite of the fact that it weighed more than a ton!

One day a brother heard a corporal say to the *Kommando-Führer*: "They really are a strange people, those *Bibelforscher* [Bible Students]; the other prisoners, physically stronger, die like flies, while they carry on, full of strength. I think Jehovah helps them!"

TESTED REGARDING NEUTRALITY EVEN IN THE CAMPS

Brother Glowacz relates an experience that he lived through while at Buchenwald: "As a test on the Witnesses, we were ordered to report to the weapons factory *Kommando* (working group) to be put to work in the manufacture of arms. After roll call the next morning all the brothers refused to join themselves to the *Kommando*. Appearing before the camp commandant, a brother explained that they would accept any work in the camp except that of making arms. In a violent rage the commandant ordered the SS to take all of us to the execution site and to place the machine guns in firing position. This was done.

"Then the commandant said: 'Think carefully and then tell me whether you accept this task, yes or no. If you refuse, I will give the order for all of you to be shot.' He repeated his threat, but all of us stayed unperturbed, without moving, not saying a word. Seeing that he would get nothing



Brother Glowacz, one of the Witnesses threatened with execution while in Buchenwald for refusing to work in the manufacture of arms

from us, he changed his tactics and said: 'Hitler is a very compassionate man; he does not want you to be shot. Each one of you will continue with his former work.'

HELPING ONE ANOTHER DURING THE OCCUPATION

The brothers overseeing the underground work of producing Bible publications did not receive any salary, not even any ration stamps needed to buy food. The purchasing of materials such as paper had to be done on the black market. How could all this work be carried on?

In each congregation, gifts and ration stamps, sacrificed by the brothers from their already meager means, were collected and given to the circuit overseer with the service reports. This enabled the hunted brothers to obtain the necessary supplies so that they could keep on providing the needed spiritual food.

Even the children did their part. For example, one evening two brothers arrived unexpectedly at the home of the Golic family. It was Brother Hartstang and a companion. The table was set for supper. The two children, Antoine and Ann-Marie, seemed to have already eaten and they went off to bed. It was only after the war that Brother Hartstang learned that they had eaten the ration intended for the two children. There was nothing else to eat in the house, and the children had spontaneously volunteered to give their meal to the brothers and to go to bed without eating, thus setting a good example of deep consideration for the theocratic organization.

HOW THE PREACHING WORK WAS UNDERTAKEN

As soon as the witness work was organized underground, the brothers no longer were content to do only informal witnessing. They undertook a more systematic activity, although being very cautious. Only the Bible was used from house to house. The brothers also offered copies of the New Testament or the Gospels, according to the possibilities of buying such publications from the Protestant bookstores. This was not done without difficulties. Indeed, the Protestant pastors were grinding their teeth because of the Witnesses' activity and refused to furnish Bibles when they knew for what purpose they were being used.

So it was necessary to use strategy to obtain Bibles from the Protestants. Efforts were not always successful. Brother Jules Ista relates that one day he went to the Evangelist Mission in Brussels to obtain some New Testaments. The one in charge asked the brother for what church they were destined. The brother tried to get around the question, but when the pastor learned who he was, he spit in his face, called him a dirty Bible Student and refused to sell him the books.

Some of the Society's publications, such as the booklets *Uncovered* and *Refugees*, were available for the brothers. They were used with great care. A lending service was organized, the same publication being used for many different people. Further, the brothers remembered the names of people who had taken books before the war. They visited these people to encourage them to read the publication and thus arouse their interest. If

the people showed no interest, the brothers suggested that the publication be returned, to enable someone else to benefit from it. Sometimes the person gave it back. At times the householder refused to give it back and out of curiosity started to read it himself, becoming interested in the Kingdom message. In this way some even came into the truth.

HOUSE TO HOUSE—WITH CAUTION

With the house-to-house work under way again, instructions were given to work with extreme caution. For example, it was essential to work alone, preaching at a house here and then at another one there, farther along the street so as not to attract attention. If the brothers were suspicious of certain houses, they would pass them by. If a publisher saw a uniform inside the house, he was not to give a witness but simply to ask an everyday question.

One day a brother inadvertently called at a house occupied by a Gestapo agent. The agent invited him inside, asked for his identity papers, locked the door and then went off to telephone for the Witness to be picked up. In the meantime the agent's wife came in and told him to escape in a hurry, which, of course, the brother did not fail to do!

RETURN VISITS

When someone became interested, a series of visits were made with the help of prepared subjects to facilitate discussion of the basic doctrines of the Bible. Booklets, such as *Uncovered* and *Refugees*, were also used to undertake what constituted a

forerunner of the modern-day home Bible studies.

In those days people with whom studies were conducted were not invited to meetings as promptly as is done today. Generally, it was not until the person had begun to preach that he was introduced to a study group, just in case he might turn out to be an informer.

BAPTISMS AT HOMES

Baptisms took place secretly at homes. On one occasion, at Sclessin near Liège, about 40 people were baptized in a very small house, the home of Brother Heuse. On another occasion 27 were baptized at the home of Brother Wladek at Waterschei. The activity did not always go unnoticed. Children playing outside were heard to say: "It's a Protestant Mass."

INCREASED BLESSINGS

In 1941 it looked as if the enemy had gained the victory—the number of publishers had dwindled from 275 to 86. But by 1942 the number of Kingdom warriors was up again to 253, including 8 pioneers. During that war-torn year, they had printed 10,000 copies of the booklet *Choosing, Riches or Ruin?* in Dutch, and 7,455 *Watchtower* magazines. During 1943 Jehovah increased the number of Kingdom preachers in Belgium to 396. These worked more than 46,000 hours while distributing 7,868 books, 17,106 booklets and 2,234 magazines. The number of congregations rose to 19. The underground printing plant produced 11,000 booklets and 14,500 magazines.

The next year was even more blessed. Now the

number of ministers rose to 545. What a victory for Jehovah over false religion and her despotic allies! The Memorial attendance was 609, and 6,000 copies of the book *Children* were printed with the cooperation of a printer in Brussels.

From 1942 to 1944 the brothers accomplished a tremendous work. They printed more than 64,000 books, booklets and magazines. This, together with the stock that had been hidden at the time of the Nazi invasion, enabled them to distribute 107,587 pieces of literature during the war. The Nazis never did succeed in destroying the work, nor did they ever find Bethel, where five members were working by the end of the war.

INSTRUCTIONS SCRUPULOUSLY FOLLOWED

The brothers scrupulously heeded the instructions coming from the Society and did not try to know more than what was necessary. Even the children carefully obeyed instructions. For example, one day Brother Schrantz arrived at Waterschei and left a carton of publications at the home of Brother Golic. Only little Ann-Marie, nine years old, was at home. Brother Schrantz gave her the carton, telling her not to mention anything to anyone, except to her father.

She hid the carton underneath the bed. When her mother came home she did not say a word about Brother Schrantz' visit. Bedtime came but she refused to go to bed. She just had to wait and see her father. Sister Golic thought this was all very mysterious. Ann-Marie stayed up until her father came home, and it was only then, and

only to her father, that she mentioned the visit and revealed that there was a carton of literature underneath the bed.

1944—THE WAR DRAWS TO A CLOSE

The country was jubilant when the Allies progressively pushed the German armies back into their own country. The Gestapo and its agents were gone! So the brothers had only one thought: Get together in an assembly as soon as possible. Meetings were hurriedly organized; the desire to get together was strong. On December 23, 1944, an assembly, with 70 in attendance, was held at Waterschei in a windowless and unheated hall.

At the same time another assembly was organized in Liège in a hall that carried the scars of a war, as yet unended. Assemblies were later organized in Brussels and then in Charleroi. Brother Hartstang was present at each assembly, now using his real name.

THE FLYING-BOMB THREAT

But Hitler would not admit defeat. During 1944 he began to use his new weapon, the flying bomb, which the Germans called Vengeance Weapon One. After his armies had been pushed back, he used it first against England and then against Belgium. This guided missile, known as V-1, carried about a ton of explosives. The V-1 began to fall on the industrial centers and ports of Liège and Antwerp, causing great destruction and loss of life. It was under such conditions, in the early part of 1945, that a more widely advertised assembly was organized in Liège in the Hall of the Home

des Invalides. The threat of the V-1 missiles was keenly felt in the town.

The Hall, with a capacity of 500 people, was full. While the assembly was in progress, a flying bomb was heard approaching. The loud stuttering sound of its motor was characteristic. As long as the noise of the engine could be heard, there was nothing to fear. If the motor stopped, the bomb was going no farther and would plunge to earth. This particular bomb was now flying over the town. Suddenly the motor stopped, and the bomb plunged to earth. Where would it fall?

In the Hall the brothers happened to be singing a song, and no one moved from his place. In contrast with this all the staff of the Home, including the director, fled to the shelters. The V-1 exploded not far from the Hall. The next day when Brothers E. Heuse, Sr., and M. Smets returned to pay the booking fee, the director asked them: "But whatever kind of people are you? Yesterday no one in the Hall moved when the V-1 fell!" It was an occasion to give him a good witness.

EMERGING FROM UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY

As soon as the German troops left, Bethel was established in Brussels, in the home of Brother Notebaert. Then Brother Hartstang rented two rooms in rue Rubens at Schaerbeek, one room being used as bedroom and office and the other as kitchen and dispatch. It was wintertime and coal was scarce and rationed. It was so cold that Brother and Sister Hartstang had to work sitting up in bed.

At that time an assembly was held at La Cour de Tilmont. Brothers coming from the mining regions of Limburg and Liège were seen arriving, carrying heavy suitcases and packages, calling at the Bethel home before continuing their journey to the assembly. What were they carrying that was so heavy? Coal? Yes, these coal-mining brothers were more favored as regards heating material, and they wanted their less favored Bethel brothers to benefit from this. Thus the Bethel coal cellar was filled up.

Workers were needed in order to reorganize Bethel. An appeal was made, and a young brother, José Nicolas Minet, came to Bethel. As there was no place for him to live at rue Rubens, he worked there during the day and slept at Brother Notebaert's home. It was necessary to find a larger place, but there was a scarcity of living quarters in the city. After much searching, a house was finally rented at Ixelles, 47 rue Wayenberg. However, because the staff had increased in number, Brother and Sister Hartstang were not able to live at this address.

REORGANIZING THE WORK

The brothers were rather like someone who has difficulty in getting readjusted to daylight after having been a long time in darkness. The congregations were now invited to send their reports on a specially prepared postcard. The card was used, but it was slipped into an envelope to keep the information secret! Initials continued to be used to indicate the sender's name, and the congregation was identified by the code used during the war

and not by the name of the locality as had now been suggested.

The aftereffects of the Nazi secret police activity continued with the brothers to such an extent that about a year and a half after the departure of the SS the Society had to remind the brothers that they were no longer working underground and that it was possible again to work in the open.

One reason for this slowness to adapt to the new situation was that the majority of the brothers in Belgium had never known what it was like to be able to preach freely. The 86 publishers at the beginning of the war had now grown to 747 in August 1945. They had much to learn as regards preaching and organizational methods in order to be on a par with their brothers in other countries where the work had not been banned.

In December 1945 the Society's president, N. H. Knorr, accompanied by Brother M. G. Henschel, stopped in Brussels to see what could be done to expedite the reorganization of the witness work. Then on January 15, 1946, the first Gilead-trained missionary arrived in Belgium. This was Brother Calvin Holmes, who was going to be a great help in reorganizing the work. He landed at Ostend and was met at the Brussels railroad station by the entire Bethel family. It was quite an event!

Brother Holmes was appointed as branch overseer. It was with joy that Brother Hartstang accepted these new arrangements—he who had done all he could during those difficult war years. Brother Hartstang was known as a very humble

brother and also as an ardent and determined worker in Jehovah's service. He served faithfully until he fell asleep in death on April 5, 1964. Sister Hartstang, now 81 years of age, is still serving Jehovah, working in the Bethel home in Holland.

PURIFYING THE CONGREGATIONS

In some congregations there was a purifying work to be done, and Brother Holmes got down to the work, not always an easy task for him because he knew neither French nor Dutch. In some cases, as in Brussels and Ieper, this cleansing had to be accomplished with much severity in order to remove immoral persons who were causing unrest and discord. Brother Holmes visited a congregation each weekend, in that way establishing a closer link with the Society.

PURCHASE OF A BETHEL HOME

The rented house that was used as the Bethel home became too small. After much searching, a house with a large workshop in the rear was bought. It was located at Schaerbeek, 28 Avenue General Eisenhower, in the suburbs of Brussels. Compared to what the family had known up until then, this house was a palace. Larger quantities of publications could be stocked here to take care of the ever-increasing needs. Furniture was scarce. Fortunately the Swiss branch had just sold an old farm, and the furniture was sent as a gift to Belgium, which was very much appreciated.

PIONEER SERVICE

A call for pioneers went out in 1945, and by October that year there were 18 pioneers in Bel-

gium. By December the number had grown to 24, and 3 special pioneers were appointed. Pioneer life was not easy in those days. One of the pioneers related that he slept on a mattress on the floor. All he had as kitchen equipment was one cooking pot and a pan, serving for all purposes. In any case, the meals were not complicated, and Jehovah never abandoned his servants.

ASSISTANCE FROM AMERICAN BROTHERS

One brother, whose parents were not Witnesses, left a well-paying job to pioneer. He said that when he left, his sobbing mother told him: "Who will take care of you? How will you be able to buy clothes for yourself?" He replied: "The birds do not sow and yet they stay alive and have what is necessary to eat!"

A few months later this pioneer was invited to make a visit to the Brussels Bethel. The brothers in the United States had got together a large amount of clothing, and the Society had sent some to Belgium to help the brothers who had suffered because of the war. The pioneers were the first to benefit from the clothing gift, and this brother received two suits, an overcoat, some shirts and two pairs of shoes. Soon afterward he went to visit his mother, who, upon seeing him, cried out: "How well dressed you are! Wherever did you get all that good clothing?" The brother smilingly replied: "From heaven!"

This clothing shipment, which weighed a total of 10,500 kilograms (23,000 lb), in addition to 1,550 kilograms (3,400 lb) of shoes, was sent by the American brothers during the years 1946 and

1947. It was distributed among 1,431 brothers, and this enabled them to be well dressed as they preached the good news of the Kingdom.

It was at that time that a large postwar assembly was held. This was at the Cirque Royal in Brussels, from October 4 to 6, 1946, the program being presented in two languages. About 2,000 people came to hear the public talk "The Prince of Peace."

NATIONALISTIC OPPRESSION RESURGES

The Nazi regime had been defeated, but the nationalistic spirit became more virulent than ever before. Satan began using this as a new weapon against those who represented God's Kingdom. As they no longer needed to work underground, the foreign brothers who had escaped being tracked down by the Nazis made their presence known to the Belgian and American authorities. Brother and Sister Hartstang requested a resident's permit from the authorities. Not only was it refused but on June 4, 1947, the minister of justice gave them eight days to get out of the country! All appeals against this unjust decision proved to be useless.

Pioneers Fritz Schneider, Erwin Klose and Willy Kloppe were imprisoned and accused of being Nazi agents. That was really the last straw—the ones who had been tracked down like wild beasts by the Gestapo! Brother Schneider was imprisoned and afterward went back to Germany, a sick man suffering from a lung condition. He died a few years later. Brother Klose was imprisoned for 11 months along with Nazi agents in spite of petitions made by hundreds of brothers and even

by local authorities. The American and British military authorities tried, though in vain, to prove that he was a Nazi agent!

VISITORS FROM BROOKLYN HEADQUARTERS

Despite opposition from nationalistic elements, for the first time the number of publishers passed the thousand mark. There were 57 pioneers. In June 1947 Brothers F. W. Franz and Grant Suiter visited Belgium. On this occasion two assemblies were held simultaneously, one in the Dutch language and the other in French. The visitors from the Society's headquarters helped the branch to become more efficiently organized and strengthened the organization in its theocratic structure.

A few months later the first postwar circuit assembly was held at La Louvière. There were 295 publishers in the circuit, but an enthusiastic crowd of 485 attended the public talk. That year the Memorial attendance was 1,525 compared with 1,099 the previous year.

MORE MISSIONARIES ARRIVE

The Society tried to send more missionaries to help the brothers, but opposition from the nationalistic elements delayed their arrival. Toward the end of 1947 Brother and Sister Buisset arrived and stayed many years as missionaries in Belgium. They were followed by five other missionaries during 1948, among whom was Elmer Johnston who served faithfully in his missionary assignment until his death in 1972.

In 1949 ten other missionaries arrived, including Allan Coville and Gijsbertus van der Bijl, followed

by Markus Hartlief in 1955 and Aalzen Wiegersma in 1965, all four of whom are still here, serving as traveling overseers.

PRIESTS EXERT PRESSURE

As the name Jehovah became more familiar to the public, the clergy opposed the Witnesses in countless ways. For example, at the instigation of the priest, opposers chased the brothers out of Lantin by hurling firecrackers at them. At Boland, a small village near Herve, the priest distributed a pamphlet to his parishioners. It told them what to do when the Witnesses call: "(1) Close your door to these peddlers of the Devil; (2) if they enter unawares, turn your radio up loud or, if that is not possible, two saucepan lids banged together will do the trick."

It was very difficult to rent a hall to give talks because of clergy pressure. At Tervueren the priest told the owner of a hall that he would rather see it 'rented to the communists than to the propagandists of this new god.' In another village the priest mobilized all the children and sent them to the hall, where they made such a noise with saucepan lids that the talk could not be given. On another occasion the priest threatened the owner of a hall that if he rented it to the Witnesses his business would be ruined. The priest would see to it that none of his parishioners would patronize that man's shop.

The mental attitude of village people toward the Witnesses at that time is well illustrated by the following experience. Brother Schrantz had to visit a brother, but he did not know his address. So

he simply asked the first one he met in the village: "Do you know where a man who has a strange religion lives?" He was immediately directed to the house without even mentioning his name!

BAN ON TRANSPORTING BIBLE LITERATURE

In 1950 Belgium was in a state of turmoil because of the return of King Leopold III. Upon the king's return from exile, demonstrations, strikes and threats of civil war disunited the Belgian people over the royalty question. The Witnesses, now numbering 2,462 ministers, took a neutral stand amid such restlessness. During this time of national tumult and only two days after a new Catholic government came to power, Satan again tried to cripple the Kingdom work.

On June 6, 1950, without any advance notice, the minister of transport prohibited the transportation of the Society's publications by the Belgian railroad and postal systems. The government ignored all letters that the branch sent in about the matter. How would the brothers and subscribers now receive spiritual food?

The Society organized magazine and literature delivery by truck to all the congregations. Then the publishers delivered the magazines to the subscribers. Jehovah richly blessed this arrangement, which gave the brothers an opportunity to make regular calls on the subscribers.

After repeated requests throughout the 31 years, it was not until October 30, 1981, that the Belgian government removed the ban on the transportation of the Society's literature!

IN THE ARDENNES AND FLEMISH TERRITORY

In 1951 the number of publishers exceeded the three thousand mark. The prosperity of the 80 congregations greatly alarmed the clergy, who lamented that congregations of Witnesses were springing up even in the extremely Catholic villages of the Ardennes. The Belgian Catholic journal, *L'Avenir du Luxembourg* (the Belgian province of Luxembourg) of December 2, 1950, showed its concern, saying: "We do not know what is going on . . . but we notice that in several villages in the vicinity of Neufchâteau and Bertrix, Jehovah's witnesses have taken root."

Though the clergy's influence on the people had diminished in the larger cities and towns, the priests still tried to maintain a tight grip in the villages. In Erps Kwerps (Flemish territory) a priest ordered a pioneer to leave the village, but the brother refused. The next day the priest again ordered the brother to leave the village. Since the brother still refused, the priest began to accompany him from door to door, accusing him of being a Protestant and of selling Bibles, which the people were forbidden to read. At each door the pioneer refuted the priest's accusations. This continued for three hours. Finally, the priest stopped going to the doors. He stood in the middle of the street and loudly spoke to the people, all the while following the brother. On the third day the priest again followed the pioneer, but this time the brother called the police and the priest disappeared. The police no longer were at the beck and call of the clergy.

THE AUTHORITIES SHOW MISTRUST

Because of the Witnesses' stand for Christian neutrality the authorities did not seem to trust the organization's peaceable, educational work. Two plainclothes policemen attended almost all the public talks. They would take notes during the talk. As soon as a public talk was advertised, two policemen could be seen in the audience even in small congregations of about 15 publishers. The policemen would often have to sit in a brother's small kitchen that had been transformed into a Kingdom Hall. In view of the situation at that time, it was deemed advisable that the foreign brothers, including the traveling overseers, not give public talks.

PRIESTS RESUME FORMER WAYS

The brothers were able now to give the unassigned territory more attention. During 1952 the publishers worked 591 towns and villages despite strong opposition from the priests who thought that the Witnesses would never come back, at least not to the remote territories. This time the priests resumed their former ways of doing things, but without police support. They incited the people to chase the Witnesses out of town. During a circuit assembly in Bastogne, the priest tore a handful of pages from the Catholic Bible that a sister was using in the witness work, and another sister was beaten by a fanatical woman who had been egged on by the priest.

In Antwerp other false shepherds tried to prevent an invalid sister from doing street work, which she did in her wheelchair at a location near

a store. The storekeeper tried to get rid of her. First he called the police, but the policeman said she was within her rights. Then he enlisted two priests who tried to persuade the sister to leave the place, but to no avail. So the priests decided to push her wheelchair down the street. At this, some taxi drivers from across the street who had been observing the proceedings quickly ran over and told the priests that unless they wanted trouble they had better get on the move. Needless to say, they scurried off.

PROGRESS WITH HELP OF MISSIONARIES

Despite the opposition, the number of publishers increased to 3,623. The Gilead graduates continued to strengthen the brothers and help them to take on added responsibilities. Very soon Belgium was no longer considered a missionary field, so the majority of the missionaries were used in a supervisory capacity, serving at Bethel or as traveling overseers. At that time all the district and circuit overseers were foreigners, and at the branch office there were only three Belgian brothers.

BRANCH OVERSEER EXPELLED

Once again the representatives of the Catholic government expressed their hatred by attacking the brothers who were taking the lead. On April 11, 1953, Brother Calvin Holmes, the branch overseer, received notice that he was being expelled from the country even though he was married to a Belgian sister. Brother G. van der Bijl was appointed as branch overseer in his place.

And what about Brother André Wozniak, whom the Gestapo had been unable to catch and whom

a former Catholic government had tried in vain to expel in 1934? This brother was requested to appear before a committee, which decided on his expulsion from the country. But before this could take place there was a change of government. The new minister of justice, not a Catholic, decided not to enforce the decision to expel Brother Wozniak. As in 1934, he again escaped from his persecutors.

The new government, more liberal than the previous one, proved to be somewhat favorable toward the Kingdom work. In fact, on July 28, 1954, one of the government ministers wrote a letter to the Society, saying that the placing of Bibles and Bible literature would not be considered peddling but rather a charitable and nonprofit work.

CONVENTION TIME

The location of Belgium, at the crossroads between London, Nuremberg, Paris and The Hague, made it easy for the Belgian brothers to attend the international Triumphant Kingdom Conventions in 1955. Two special trains were used. French authorities stopped one of the trains on its arrival at the French border. Using loudspeakers, the French State Police called out the names of several brothers, forbidding their entry into France for "security reasons"! The brothers whose names had been called out left the train but reached the convention by taking regular trains after a round-about through the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

THE AUTHORITIES ACT FAVORABLY

As clergy opposition waned, the authorities gained greater respect for the Kingdom work. In

fact, they went as far as making unilateral decisions in favor of the brothers to guarantee their constitutional rights of worship. Thus a royal decree of January 8, 1958, published in the March 14, 1958, issue of the *Official Journal*, canceled all action taken by the mayor and aldermen of the town of Anvaing on June 8, 1957, forbidding public talks in the open air. The royal decree accused the Council of Aldermen of having exceeded its powers in imposing this ban.

The only places where clergy pressure was felt now were in the rural territories, such as Orp-le-Grand. Arrangements had been made for many brothers to stay in a large house in this town during a circuit assembly to be held May 23-25, 1958. Just before the assembly the parish priest brought about the cancellation of these accommodations. He also forced the local baker to revoke his agreement to supply bread for the Sunday noon meal at the cafeteria. But this did not prevent the brothers from getting the needed food and rest. A large dormitory was set up in the assembly hall itself, and large straw-filled sacks were used as beds. Despite the opposition, 532 attended the assembly.

NO LANGUAGE BARRIERS

A highlight of the 1959 service year was the Awake Ministers National Assembly held at the Brussels Sports Palace, where 6,896 persons heard the public talk given simultaneously in French and Dutch. During this five-day convention, 378 new Witnesses were baptized. What made this convention so outstanding was the unity between the

Flemish (Dutch-speaking) and Walloon (French-speaking) brothers, who assembled in the same auditorium, side by side. The sound system had been set up so that each one could hear his own language spoken. To make this possible, the audience was divided into two sections. Such a bilingual spectacle did not go unnoticed, and the gathering was given wide publicity.

Moreover, this convention proved that difference in language does not cause division among true Christians. In contrast, Belgium is greatly divided by language disputes; in certain Catholic churches in Antwerp and Vilvoorde, the police have had to intervene to separate Flemish Catholics from Walloon Catholics. The reason? Some Flemish Catholics could not bear having their priests officiate at Mass in French!

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

In 1960 an important step forward was made in legally defending and establishing the good news in this country. That year there were over 7,000 publishers in the country and 10,237 persons were present at the Memorial. The Kingdom Halls were becoming too small, and several congregations had begun to enlarge their halls or build new ones. The congregations owning Kingdom Halls requested the same tax exemption that the churches have. Their request was refused on the grounds that Jehovah's Witnesses do not constitute a religion. Moreover, the Tax Office claimed that there was no public worship going on in the Kingdom Halls. Of course, such claims were absolutely false.

The Court of Appeals in Liège rejected the claims of the State in its decision of June 29, 1960. Now Kingdom Halls could benefit from property tax exemption. Furthermore, the court decided that the State must reimburse the brothers for taxes that had been paid on the halls.

FOREIGN PUBLISHERS

In this small country of 30,513 square kilometers (11,781 sq mi), the major part of the population live in cities and towns. Since industry is the major means of employment, it is easy to understand why there are so many foreign workers in the country. In fact, about 10 percent of the population are of foreign origin, of whom a third are Italians.

Upon arrival, they worked chiefly in the coal mines. Thus it was once again in the Charleroi, Liège and Limburg areas that the truth spread among the foreign population. Bible studies were started immediately, and to help these sincere people more fully, some of the Belgian brothers even learned the Italian language.

LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

The 1962 report showed that about 40 percent of the publishers were foreigners and were unable to express themselves clearly in either French or Dutch. To overcome this problem, the February 1962 *Kingdom Ministry* announced the establishment of a new school to help these brothers get a better knowledge of the local language. Instead of attending the Theocratic Ministry School, these publishers learned how to read and speak the local tongue with the help of the book *From*

The Belgian branch building in the Brussels suburb of Kraainem



Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained. This greatly helped them to become teachers of the Word. They now were able to discuss Bible subjects instead of offering the magazines only. Today several of them are elders and ministerial servants in the congregations.

CONGREGATIONS CONSISTING OF PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

A very special event, the first of its kind in Belgium, took place on July 7-11, 1965. A large international convention was held in Charleroi, where 63 years previously the truth had begun to take root. Brothers from northern France and Paris were present with their Belgian brothers, and on Sunday there was a peak attendance of 11,710.

Italian sessions were also held at this convention, as had been the case for some years. But the Italian brothers were no longer a handful, for 725 attended this "Word of Truth" Assembly.

How grateful they were when Brother Knorr announced that ten Italian congregations would be formed in Belgium. The news was greeted with much applause. Great increases followed. At the time of this writing there are over 2,500 Italian publishers in 32 congregations, forming 3 circuits.

More sheeplike people were found among the Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish and English populations. Among the new congregations formed were one Portuguese, three English, seven Spanish and eight Greek. These brothers from other countries are full of zeal for Jehovah, and their endurance is exemplary. Consider the Greek congregation in Brussels: All 47 baptized publishers were auxiliary pioneers at least once during the service year!

NEW BETHEL HOME

Over a 20-year period, the Bethel home located at 28 Avenue General Eisenhower, Schaerbeek-Brussels, had amply filled the needs of the Kingdom work here. But there was not enough room for literature or for all the members of the Bethel family to live under one roof. In 1966 Brother Marcel Gillet, then serving as branch overseer and at present the Branch Committee coordinator, was informed by Brother Knorr that a new Bethel home would be built. In November 1966 construction began. In February 1968 a fine, spacious Bethel home, in the Brussels suburb of Kraainem, was ready for use. What a difference from the place that had been rented in 1945!

CONFUSION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

While over 10,000 Kingdom publishers were warmly united in the Dutch- and French-speaking

sections of Belgium, confusion, hatred and anarchy broke out in the Catholic Church. This time the newspapers did not spare the church but even went as far as ridiculing it. Many Catholics confided to the brothers: "Nothing is going right in our church," "This is the end of the Catholic Church," and "We don't know how to pray anymore."

Rioting between Catholics broke out in the churches themselves. In Antwerp, Vilvoorde and elsewhere, Flemish Catholics attacked the churches because Mass was said in French for French-speaking audiences living in those cities. Police had to be called in to break up the rioting. Times had changed since the Catholic priest called the police to have the brothers chased out of town! In Antwerp, Catholic extremists wrote on the walls: "Stop saying Mass in French in Vilvoorde!" This is the city where the clergy had the Bible translator William Tyndale strangled and burned, and where today there exists a congregation of 70 Bible-loving publishers of Jehovah's Kingdom. In Louvain, famous for its Catholic university, young priests shouted in the streets: "Down with the bishop!" It finally became necessary for the government to intervene and maintain order.

IMPRISONED BECAUSE OF CHRISTIAN NEUTRALITY

Over the years hundreds of our young brothers were imprisoned because of the issue of Christian neutrality. Up until the present time our brothers are sentenced to two years in prison because they refuse to violate their Christian neutrality. For nearly 40 years any brothers in prison were

not allowed to meet together or receive the visit of congregation elders. Not until August 5, 1976, did a more broadminded minister of justice give permission for accredited elders to visit them.

AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENT

The "Divine Victory" International Assembly, held in Brussels, August 8 to 12, 1973, was an unforgettable event. This convention was memorable not only because of the record attendance but also because this time our Spanish and Portuguese brothers were invited to join us in Brussels. They had not yet been granted the right to meet together freely in their own countries, so they came in large numbers. The peak attendance at the Spanish session was 19,687; at the French session it was 14,625; our Flemish brothers had 11,101 and our Portuguese brothers 8,152, making a grand total of 53,565.

Being conscious of the persecutions that the Spanish and Portuguese brothers had encountered over many years, the Belgian brothers made preparations to receive them hospitably, expressing the depth of their love toward them. The Spanish and Portuguese brothers and sisters, already known for their hospitality, were also determined to give proof of their deep love and overwhelming gratitude in being able to meet together with their brothers in Belgium. Countless were the expressions of love and the exchange of presents during that joyous occasion!

FOREIGN PUBLISHERS RETURN HOME

Many organizations have their centers here in Belgium, such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty

View of the Bioul Assembly Hall, one of
the two buildings purchased in 1980

Organization), EC (European Communities) and SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe). This brings many people of different nationalities into the country. Thus, many learn the truth here in Belgium and then return to their country of origin as Jehovah's Witnesses. During the course of the years, this has been true of many Italians, Spaniards and Greeks who initially came here to work in the coal mines. Then after varied periods of stay in Belgium they returned home and contributed enormously to the preaching work in their native lands. Because of the difficult economic times, these homeward treks have increased in number.

PRESENT SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

Today the message of the "good news of the kingdom" has been spread throughout Belgium. There are no longer any unassigned territories. The entire country is apportioned out among the 288 congregations. In April 1983 the peak number of publishers in Belgium reached 20,018.

What is the present situation in the country? How do the people in general react to the preaching work? The influence once exerted by the Catholic religion has greatly diminished. Even if many Catholics still claim to be religious, it is obvious that material comforts have induced many



to develop a materialistic outlook. This, coupled with a total lack of interest in religious matters on the part of others, has created an enormous indifference among the people. It is thus hard to speak to them about God and his purposes. This attitude poses a challenge to the publishers, and it encourages them to try using striking introductions in an endeavor to arouse some interest in the Kingdom message.

ASSEMBLY HALLS

The renting of halls for circuit assemblies was quite often very expensive, and many of them did

Inside view of the Bornem
Assembly Hall



not meet our needs. So the circuits arranged to acquire halls of their own. In 1980 two such halls were purchased, one at Bioul and the other at Bornem. Enthusiastically the brothers and sisters contributed both money and time so as to adapt these halls to the needs of the assemblies. Since these Assembly Halls are always kept clean, the brothers no longer have to undertake enormous cleanup operations before using a hall.

JEHOVAH'S LOVING-KINDNESS—A CROWN

In 1902 Brother Tilmant, as the very first Kingdom publisher in Belgium, may have asked himself: "How . . . will they hear without someone to preach?" (Rom. 10:14) Who would have thought that the first seeds of truth this faithful brother sowed away back then would produce, 80 years later, more than 19,000 courageous witnesses for Jehovah?

One can appreciate how thrilled Brothers Smets and Poelmans must have been when, in 1952, they saw that the five persons who had stayed faithful to Jehovah after the test of 1918 had grown to more than 3,500!

Those courageous Christians died, having in mind that Jesus said: "Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens." (Matt. 5:12) Now that they are joint heirs with Christ in the heavens, one can imagine their joy at seeing the abundant blessings of Jehovah upon his people.

May Jehovah be praised for his loving-kindness! We thank him for having raised up so many faithful Witnesses in these modern times. In fact, while compiling this report, we had just one re-

gret: The lack of space prevents us from mentioning hundreds of other brothers and sisters who, as Andronicus and Junias, although being less known, were like pillars and "men of note," and have labored faithfully in the work of the Lord.—Rom. 16:7.

The magnificent examples of endurance on the part of these faithful brothers, as well as the direction given by Jehovah to his people here in Belgium through "the faithful and discreet slave," constitute a powerful source of encouragement to all of us. This stimulates us to continue "the fine fight of the faith" until the day when Jehovah will say, through his King Jesus Christ: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world."—1 Tim. 6:12; Matt. 25:34.

When that glorious day dawns, no longer will the fields and pastures of Belgium be in danger of being transformed into battlefields, as has twice been the case since 1914. No; these fields, as well as the rest of Europe and, indeed, the whole earth, will be transformed into a worldwide Paradise, cleared of all war and oppression. Until then all lovers of righteousness in Belgium and elsewhere echo the words of the apostle John, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus."—Rev. 22:20.

Alaska



SEWARD'S ICEBOX is what Alaska was called in 1867 when the United States purchased it from Russia. The U.S. Secretary of State, William H. Seward, arranged the transaction, and opposers also dubbed it Seward's Folly. Such uncomplimentary expressions sprang from the mistaken beliefs that snow and cold never leave this remote corner of earth and that it is enshrouded with to-

tal darkness six months at a time. Although a land of extremes, Alaska offers enough attractions to prompt residents to look on their part of the earth as paradise.

True, ice and snow are very much a part of the seven-month winter landscape when temperatures may dip to 62 degrees below zero Celsius (-80° F.) But summer heat at Fairbanks has soared to 38 degrees Celsius (100° F.) on occasion. When the summer sun shines for 20 hours a day, locals are infused with greater vigor and enthusiasm to accomplish their daily tasks. Encompassing more than 1,525,000 square kilometers (589,000 sq mi) and spanning four time zones, Alaska is the largest state of the United States, more than double the size of Texas. Despite its claim of being the biggest, nearly one fifth as large as the rest of the nation, it is the least populated state, with only about 425,000 people. Numerous mountains and glaciers have locked within their icy fingers a large portion of the world's fresh water, and two million of Alaska's many lakes are larger than eight hectares (20 a.). The Saint Elias Mountain range boasts this hemisphere's largest glacier, Malaspina, an ice sheet 80 kilometers (50 mi) wide.

Some have described the land as having "five faces." Treeless tundra with constant winds marks the Aleutian chain of islands. The southeastern panhandle is a dense rain forest with huge Sitka spruce trees and commercial fishing as its claim to fame. South-central Alaska, including Anchorage, the Matanuska Valley and the Kenai Peninsula, houses the majority of the state's populace and enjoys moderate weather. Around Palmer in

the Matanuska Valley is lush farmland capable of producing beef, milk, poultry and some vegetables. Cabbages of more than 30 kilograms (70 lbs) and turnips in excess of 14 kilograms (30 lbs) are not uncommon.

Fairbanks, the "Golden Heart of the North," experiences extremes in temperature—the hottest in summer and some of the coldest in winter. This is the jumping-off place to the spongy Arctic tundra. And, finally, the north and west coastal areas are dotted with Eskimo and Indian villages; here summer provides only a little warming from the extreme winter cold.

Adding to the wonders of this northern paradise are 13 active volcanoes, as well as majestic Mount McKinley, towering 6,194 meters (20,320 ft) in the clouds as North America's highest peak. The countryside is rich in wildlife, minerals, timber and oil. Is it any wonder the early Aleutian Islanders called it *Alyeska*, meaning "the great land"?

It is ironic that this land of great natural wealth, "Seward's Icebox," was purchased from Russia in 1867 for only \$7,200,000, about five cents per hectare (2 cents per a.)! The Russians had sought riches from the fur-bearing animals. In 1897-98 sourdough prospectors flocked here, searching for the prize of gold along the Klondike trail. Later, commercial fishermen plied the 53,000 kilometers (33,000 mi) of tidal coastline in search of wealth from the sea. Now oil-field workers drill for the precious black gold (petroleum) under the ground. But, Alaska boasts even more valuable treasures than all of these.

TRUE WEALTH COMES TO A RICH LAND

The resurrected Jesus Christ told his disciples that they would be witnesses of him "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Perched on the top of the globe, Alaska certainly qualifies as a "distant part of the earth." Just as Alaska has not given up her physical resources easily, neither has she accepted the wealth of the good news without resistance. It has taken the determination of hardy servants of Jehovah, backed up by his holy spirit, to penetrate this hostile, rugged environment.

The first seeds of truth were scattered along the coastline in 1910 by Captain Beams, the skipper of a whaling ship. Little is known about the details of his activity, except that he spoke the truth and placed literature at his various ports of call.

In the late 1920's a more concentrated effort was launched by Frank Day, an anointed Witness from Seattle, Washington. Each summer, for more than 12 years, he worked his way through the territory, preaching, and placing literature. To sustain himself, he sold eyeglasses as he traveled from village to village, yet keeping the preaching foremost. Since he worked alone, he depended greatly on Jehovah's guidance.

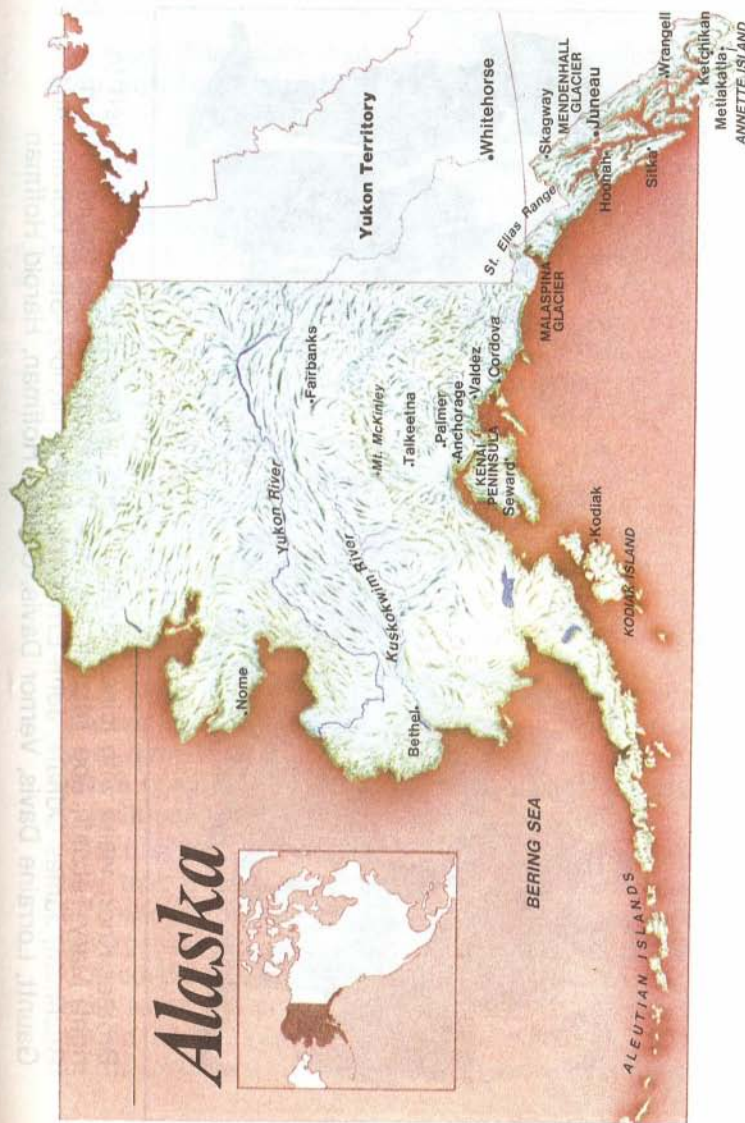
Sister Winnie Pearson from the interior city of Fairbanks recalled moving into a house in 1930 and finding copies of *Studies in the Scriptures*, placed by Brother Day. This brother left a trail of good work that stretched from Ketchikan to Nome, a distance of about 1,900 kilometers (1,200 mi). No little accomplishment when one considers that he

had to cover his territory while hobbling on an artificial leg!

In August 1941 Brother Day wrote to the Society's office at Brooklyn, recommending that a congregation be formed in Anchorage. He recommended that Brother Karl Liebau take the lead. Where the application asked how many others would be witnessing with Brother Liebau, the number "one" was written in. That "one" was Brother O. P. Rees. Thus the first congregation in Alaska's largest city was made up of two devoted servants.

In those days there was no road connecting the seaport city of Seward with Anchorage. Brother Liebau decided that the section houses along the railroad linking the two cities needed a witness. So, off he went on foot! He would witness to the man or two in each section house, stay the night and march off down the tracks to the next one. He walked the entire distance of more than 160 kilometers (100 mi), witnessing along the way. Brother Liebau continued faithful until his death in 1969.

Efforts to push farther into the Alaskan wilderness were not always met with immediate success. Winnie Pearson recalled when Brother Day came through Fairbanks during his last trip to Alaska in 1942. Loading a canoe with food supplies, literature and his large wooden phonograph with its protruding horn, he pushed off from shore for a grueling trip down the Yukon River. In a short time, however, he showed up at Sister Pearson's door with sodden literature and a very wet pho-





Brother Knorr visits with missionaries serving in Alaska in 1948: (from left to right) Mary Tetzlaff, Abe Tetzlaff, Hermon Woodard, Charles Gauntt, Ralph Bachman, James Odham, John Errichetti, Nathan Knorr, Stella Odham, Ada Gauntt, Lorraine Davis, Vernor Davis, Claudia Hoffman, Harold Hoffman

nograph. His canoe had capsized! This ended his journeys to Alaska.

ASSISTANCE FROM CANADA

During those years several Canadian brothers, working under the direction of the Society's branch office in Toronto, volunteered to help in the Alaskan field. Using a fishing boat obtained by the Society for preaching the good news, they began to work the coastal cities of Juneau, Skagway, Hoonah and Sitka. This crew of four, including Brother Frank Franske, decided to push farther north. They ran into heavy seas, and after 26 hours of battling the severe weather, they were forced to turn back to Ketchikan. The disappointment of having to turn back was eased when they discovered Sister Anna Hoguewood, who had started Kingdom service in 1911. She remained loyal until her death in Ketchikan in 1949 at the age of 76.

These courageous brothers had a wonderful time distributing literature, as they said, "by the ton." They were attracted to the Alaskans, whom Brother Franske describes as the "rough-and-ready type; fishermen, loggers, trappers and miners; all with a hospitable and generous nature along with a much-needed sense of humor."

Just as the early sourdough miners found that they had to sift through a lot of gravel to find the yellow nuggets of gold, so these early Christian "prospectors" found that much effort would be needed to find a few sheeplike people. In 1938 there were five publishers reporting Kingdom service in Alaska. This increased to seven in 1942, but in 1943 and 1944 it dropped back to two or



Hermon Woodard and John Errichetti at Ketchikan; they were affectionately called "the boys"

three. Much seed had been planted, though, with the use of Bible literature, but it was obvious that something more was needed for Alaska.

LIKE BALSAM OUT OF GILEAD

Just as highly prized balsam was used in Bible times to heal and cure, Jehovah's organization sent eight men and women as gifts to provide spiritual healing in the Alaskan territory. (Compare Jeremiah 46:11.) That small population of about 100,000 was not neglected, since Gilead-trained pioneers were sent in 1944 to advance Kingdom interests.

Harold and Claudia Hoffman, Ralph Bachman and Chester Sieradski were sent to Juneau, the

capital. John Errichetti and Gordon Rogers took up their work at Ketchikan, one of the several island cities that hug the coastline of the Alaska panhandle. The largest frontier communities of Anchorage and Fairbanks were to be cared for by James E. Odham and Hermon Woodard. Later on, Brothers Errichetti and Woodard teamed up. This pair, affectionately called "the boys" by the Alaskan brothers, were to have a great influence on future growth in Alaska.

Then in 1945 another Gilead graduate, Charles Gauntt, arrived to serve in Juneau. In 1948 he married Sister Ada Anderson, also a Gilead graduate, and they continued to serve in Alaska until October 1954. The Gauntts' two sons, Charles and Tom, are now in full-time service, Charles in Chile and Tom at Brooklyn Bethel. In 1946 four more missionaries were added to the team that was sent from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

NOT A VERY WARM WELCOME

How would you react if you were asked to go to Alaska to preach? No doubt you would have mixed emotions. Yet eight hardy pioneers volunteered for this unusual assignment. The majority of missionaries who graduated from Gilead School had to face the heat and humidity of parts of Central and South America and Africa. But this assignment would bring challenges of another kind. They were traveling northward! A warm welcome was not

anticipated from the hostile climate. Would they put their trust in Jehovah, to meet the rigors of their new assignment?

When the two missionary brothers arrived in Anchorage, they rented a one-room apartment for \$35 a month. It was a cubbyhole. Toilet facilities were outside and around the corner. A water faucet with a bucket nearby was the only plumbing available. This was their missionary home and the focal point for scouting out the territory. From this base they would reach Talkeetna, Palmer and Seward, a frontier territory some 320 kilometers (200 mi) long!

At Fairbanks, a wanigan, a small shack on skids, served as their missionary home. With little or no insulation in the walls, these were not the most ideal living quarters. It was common for the brothers to reach for a garment in the closet and find it frozen to the wall. No mystery, however, since the thermometer recorded 45 degrees below zero Celsius (-50° F.) outside!

"NIGHT" WITNESSING DURING THE DAY

The missionaries expected that it would be cold in Alaska. But what was not fully anticipated and was difficult to accept was the lack of sunlight in the wintertime. Brother Woodard remembers that first year: "A long winter was spent in Anchorage. We had about three hours of sunlight, and for many days, 'murk' would be a better term."

In Fairbanks the problem was greater, for the days there are even shorter during the winter period. When the sun rises at almost midmorning and sets only a few hours later, this can have a

detrimental effect on a newcomer to Alaska. Winter ice-fog conditions add to the gloom or murk that cuts down visibility on the roads to only a few meters. These dreary winter conditions often contribute to a psychological struggle. In Fairbanks, by 11 o'clock one could expect the daily routine of house-to-house witnessing to be well under way. But in December it is barely daylight at that time. Often, people would sleep until the sun rose, so getting householders out of bed was common. In order to get the good news preached, the missionaries had to engage in "night" witnessing during the day. To avoid getting people out of bed, the brothers decided to call at the homes where the lights were on. This did help somewhat, but it was amazing how many householders they still got out of bed because people simply had not turned their lights off the night before. Undaunted, the missionaries made the best of this situation.

GOING NORTH FOR THE WINTER

They soon learned that winter was really the best time to contact people. In those years good quality lubricants and fuels for machinery were not available, so residents simply stored their automobiles for the winter, because they would only freeze up if driven. This worked to the brothers' advantage, as it kept most of the people indoors for the winter. When the basic chores were accomplished there were few places to go, and householders usually welcomed any visitors who were brave enough to come to call. What a challenge at 51 degrees below zero Celsius (-60° F.)!

With this in mind, the missionaries found the

best strategy for witnessing was for them to go north for the winter and south for the summer. This is opposite to what vacationers do in the northern hemisphere. But it was most practical when it came to spreading the Kingdom message in Alaska. Our brothers were able to conduct more Bible studies with people, since secular work in those days almost came to a standstill during the winter months. In their summer territory, south-eastern Alaska, reaching remote villages by boat brought its challenges too.

CABIN FEVER

Another cold climate problem frequently encountered is cabin fever. Long periods of darkness and extreme cold can force a person to remain indoors just about all the time. This affects the disposition, making one feel jumpy and irritable. Every little discomfort or disturbance is magnified, and the walls can appear to move in on you. Clinics have been set up by doctors who specialize in treating those suffering from this ailment. Our brothers, however, quickly adjusted to their assignment. Jehovah's willing servants found the best medicine for cabin fever—the satisfying activity of helping people learn of the hope found in God's Word. Getting out of one's home to cheer up others is the best remedy.

A BRIDE COMES TO ALASKA

In 1947 Brother James Odham took secular work to prepare for marriage. He made arrangements for his bride, Stella, to come to Anchorage. Since there were no plumbing facilities in their primitive "honeymoon cottage," the former mis-

sionary home, taking a bath posed a challenge. The Odhams decided to purchase a portable, rubber-lined bathtub from a mail-order house. Water was heated on the stove, and they enjoyed the luxury of a bath in their tiny, but warm, home. But now, how were they going to dispose of a bathtubful of water? It was 40 degrees below zero (Celsius and Fahrenheit) outside! With no drain in the cabin, they decided to drag the tub through the door and simply dump its contents outside. A surprise was ahead. As quickly as the water left the tub it turned to ice right on the doorstep! This ice-skating pond remained on the doorstep for the rest of the winter, and as visitors came by, Brother Odham would caution, "Be careful of my wife's bath there!" A sense of humor certainly came to the rescue in those days.

SEVENTEEN FEET OF RAIN!

Contending with snow and sub-zero temperature was one thing. But the newcomers who were eager to spread the good news to the southeastern area of the state were also in for a surprise. They never realized how difficult it could be to put up with simple rain when it continues day after day without letup.

In 1944, prior to reaching Alaska, Brother Errichetti met faithful Brother Day in Seattle, Washington. With a knowing grin, the experienced veteran of Alaska gave Brother Errichetti a rubber raincoat with the warning, "You will need it in Ketchikan!" Brother Errichetti learned the full meaning of those words when he arrived in Ketchikan. It is difficult to explain how over-

whelming the storms can be, storms in which the winds drive the rain horizontally day after day, week after week.

Brother Vernor Davis and his wife were assigned to Ketchikan in 1946. When they arrived that bright day of June 13 they smiled at the sun. But it did not take long for the deluge to wash that smile away. They express how they had to cope with the elements:

"One March there was not a 20-minute period during the month when it was not raining. Why not use an umbrella? According to local custom, men do not bother with umbrellas. One simply had to be waterproof. We wore raincoats, of course, and at the doorstep we had to be careful not to tip our heads forward or the water that had collected on our hats would pour into our book bags. Often we carried book bags upside down. Then, when out of the rain we would turn them right side up."

Rainfall the first year the missionaries were in Ketchikan reached 523 centimeters (206 in.). That is more than 5 meters (17 ft)! This topped the annual average of 381 centimeters (150 in.) or 3.8 meters (12.5 ft). It was necessary to return home several times a day to change into dry clothing before continuing with the preaching work. This perseverance might make us think twice before we decide to forgo field service because of a few drops of rain.

ANOTHER EFFORT BY BOAT

Over the years, witnessing by boat provided opportunities for brothers to reach the people of many isolated communities on the coast. This



Ava (Nick) Nickles, a retired Ketchikan fisherman, continues to fish for men at the age of 93

produced dangers at sea and required constant vigilance and expertise in piloting.

In the fall of 1948 Ava (Nick) Nickles, a Ketchikan fisherman who was interested in the truth, offered to transport Brothers Errichetti and Woodard to the villages not yet reached with the Kingdom hope. In his 12.8-meter (42-ft) fishing boat, the *Irene D.*, they reached many ports. One time, when trying to cross a stretch of water about 40 kilometers (25 mi) wide, the engine quit. The wind was blowing hard and the sea was running high. Upon investigation, they found the batteries had jarred loose, spilled acid on the distributor cap and shorted out the engine. Next, the starter spring broke. Brother Errichetti recalls that evening vividly:

"We began to drift broadside with the heavy seas and to take quite a pounding. We lost steerage. All of us became seasick, with the boat drifting wherever the wind and tide took us. We started to drift at about four in the afternoon, and by

the time the searchlight of a Coast Guard boat found us, we had drifted 26 kilometers [16 mi] out to sea! Our prayers had ascended to Jehovah and he heard them." But these dangers at sea did not stop the brothers as they continued to witness without letup.

Today, Brother Nickles, at the age of 93, is retired from fishing but has not stopped fishing for men. He continues to witness from house to house each week, as possible, and serves as a ministerial servant with the Ketchikan Congregation.

FINDING HEARTS OF GOLD

One can imagine the joy that these early "prospectors" for Jehovah experienced when they lo-



cated a "find." These people with humble hearts were like treasures of gold. When they took their stand for Jehovah's Messianic Kingdom they truly became precious in the sight of God and men.

On Annette Island is the tiny village of Metlakatla. A small population of only a few hundred from the Tsimshian Indian tribe live there. One of these Indian women was Minnie Booth. She was a kind, warmhearted, soft-spoken precious person. With the help of Jehovah she courageously broke away from the influence of tribal pressure. For many years she stood as the lone witness for Jehovah in her village. Sister Booth did not hesitate to offer the truth to everyone she met. Happily, a genuine response was shown by a friend of the Booth family, Louis Fawcett, and he continues to serve faithfully to this day. Yet, at the time of her death in 1971, Sister Booth had no one in her family who accepted the truth.

But Jehovah continued to bless her work even after her death, and years later the seed of truth germinated in the heart of her granddaughter, who brought the truth back to her family members in the village. Today, there is a congregation of 15 to 20 happy Witnesses in Metlakatla, the nucleus of the group being made up of some of the Tsimshian tribe. Results such as this show how Jehovah has blessed the early activity of faithful servants. Imagine Sister Booth's joy in the earthly

First baptism in Alaska
—performed in 1948 in
front of Mendenhall Glacier

resurrection when she is greeted by her offspring that finally benefited from her labors of love!

FIRST ALASKAN ASSEMBLY

Bea Buchanon of Juneau may well have been the most excited one of all as preparations were under way in 1948 for the first assembly in Alaska, a milestone in the work of the missionaries. It was also a special day in the life of Sister Buchanon, for she was among the first ones to accept the truth in Juneau and was anticipating water baptism. Sister Buchanon recalls: "Five of us were baptized in a pool directly in front of Mendenhall Glacier." It would be difficult for her to forget the time she was submerged in chilly glacial waters. Brothers Nathan Knorr and Lyman Swingle were on hand for that happy occasion, and Sister Rose Hamilton recalled: "Brother Knorr took off his coat and tended some little children while the mothers were being baptized. I couldn't help but think how different this was from Christendom's religious leaders that I had known." With a total attendance of 63, including some who visited from other states, the brothers saw the beginning of a new era—assemblies *within* the Alaska territory.

Prior to this, anyone who wanted to attend a convention had to arrange to travel to one of the lower 48 states or to Canada. Now, conventions would be enjoyed in our own backyard. But other obstacles remained due to great distances, rugged terrain, lack of roads, and remote island communities, all entailing much time and expense. When a family of four traveled to assemblies within Alaska in good time, the father would have to

bear the expense of at least \$500 per assembly just for travel. (Today the expense is even greater.) On the other hand, if he decided to use the marine highway or ferry system, the cost would be somewhat reduced, but it would require several days more for travel. Then the family head would have additional expense due to extra days lost from his secular work. Attendances at conventions show the brothers appreciate them and are willing to make the sacrifices. Over the years the number assembling together has been well over the number of publishers associated with the congregations.

THE YUKON TERRITORY

Canada's Yukon Territory is now cared for by the Alaska branch office. This vast section of Northland covers an area that is more than 518,000 square kilometers (200,000 sq mi), about one third the size of Alaska. Its population of less than 25,000 is mostly Anglican and Roman Catholic. The Yukon's geographical features are similar to those of interior Alaska, with snowcapped mountains and abundant wildlife. Spiritual awakening in this neighboring land paralleled that of the activity in Alaska.

In 1897-98 practically the whole world was awakened by discovery of gold along the Yukon River. At the height of the Klondike gold rush at that time, tens of thousands flocked to the Yukon Territory. A few gold seekers brought pieces of the Society's Bible literature with them. One attorney who had gone north during that period told the brothers that he had been given literature

as a gift from a fine man and personal friend, J. F. Rutherford.

Other than for one or two isolated cases of informal witnessing, the territory remained virtually untouched until 1951, when the Toronto branch sent pioneers into the Yukon. Brother Allan Crich and his partner, Joseph Hawryluk, trekked the length and breadth of this vast wilderness. Brother Crich recalls days in isolated areas when his diet consisted of only dried fish and prunes.

Brother Sid Drebbitt reminisces over the first year of the Whitehorse Congregation when he was baptized in a natural outdoor pool and the temperature was 29 degrees below zero Celsius (-20° F.). He adds with a grin that he was warm and cozy, though, since the pool was a natural hot spring near Whitehorse. This was a landmark event in that his was the first baptism in the Yukon Territory. Brother Drebbitt's mother, once an avid churchgoer, and his father, formerly a communist lecturer, along with his sister, all accepted the truth and symbolized their dedication to Jehovah.

The comments of Brother Drebbitt reveal some of the pressures that the brothers had to endure: "While I was doing street work, car gangs would drive by and swear at me, calling me names and throwing things at me. Some would threaten to beat me up if I did not get off the street, but I

Branch facility in Anchorage, including an office, apartment and a Kingdom Hall that seats 250

stood firm and remained faithful, feeling stronger than ever."

What about the effects of isolation? Brother Drebbitt continues: "In those days we would see the circuit overseer only once a year. There wasn't much bus service or transportation of any kind, and the air service was mostly for the military. So we had to study hard and keep the work going by ourselves, as the closest congregation was 918 miles [1,477 km] away. Sometimes our mail would take months to reach us." The loneliness that resulted from this isolation required a strong relationship with Jehovah.

SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER

Alaska was about to receive personal attention from another resource of Jehovah's organization. Serving where the need is greater became an av-



The first branch overseer of Alaska, Andrew K. Wagner, and his wife, Vera



enue of service for pioneers as well as those who could not take up the full-time work. In 1959 several families and individuals responded to the invitation to settle in Alaska. Now that the trail had been blazed for spiritual progress, these devoted praisers of Jehovah would provide the needed stability and steady training for the newly baptized brothers. Down to this day several of these families continue to strengthen the brothers and have made Alaska their home.

BRANCH OFFICE ESTABLISHED

The decade of the 1960's began with a winding down of the missionaries' role in Alaska and the Yukon. Strong groups of spiritually minded brothers and sisters had been organized. In 1961 "the faithful and discreet slave" recognized the need to draw these far-flung groups closer together. A branch office in Anchorage would accomplish this. Arrangements were made when Brother Milton Henschel visited, and in September 1961 Andrew K. Wagner arrived to take up his new duties as branch overseer. The Yukon Territory of Canada would be cared for by the Alaska branch

office, providing circuit assemblies with international flavor as brothers and sisters from two countries would assemble together. Brother Tom Didur, circuit overseer from Canada, had served all of northern Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon and northern Alaska for several years. Under the newly formed branch his assignment centered on Alaska and the Yukon.

The immediate benefits of an Alaskan branch are related by Brother Wagner in his report to the Society: "Much of the increase this year [1962] has come as a result of better shepherding made possible by the closer oversight of the work that the local branch is able to provide. There is also evidence of greater maturity on the part of many who have felt weak because of isolation." One overseer remarked: "Up to that time we had felt somewhat like orphans, due to the distance from other congregations and the headquarters."

When Brother Woodard left Alaska in 1963, only one of the original missionaries remained. In 1964 Brother Knorr wrote to Brother Errichetti and invited him to go to Brooklyn Bethel, where he is continuing to serve down to this day. A man who stuck faithfully to his assignment, Brother Errichetti said: "Alaska was my assignment for 20 years and I enjoyed it very much. Brother Woodard and I had some hard times, but Jehovah, our loving God, always pulled us through." How true those words! These two brothers especially displayed an outstanding resourcefulness all the years they served in Alaska. There was hardly anything they did not know about living off the land, and they were ideal servants for the untamed

Gerald Ronco,
present Branch
Committee
coordinator,
and his wife, Lucy



and inhospitable territory of those years. They gained the respect of the people and did much to encourage the brothers, who followed their zeal in Kingdom activity in spite of hardships. These two certainly showed by their zealous service that these last days are no time to take one's ease.

BUILDING KINGDOM HALLS

The permanence of the congregations established by the missionaries now manifested itself in the new Kingdom Halls that were springing up throughout Alaska. After a goat shed in Fairbanks, a Quonset hut in Whitehorse and a cabin in Kodiak, came the bright new look of inviting meeting places. These Kingdom Halls were proof that Jehovah's people were here to stay! Brothers with ability in the construction trades were especially busy during those years of building Kingdom Halls. Brother R. C. Daily, one of the "fiftyniners" who arrived that year (1959) to serve where the need is greater, supervised at least eight of these projects. This period was climaxed by the construction of a most attractive branch facility in Anchorage, including an office, apartment and

a Kingdom Hall that seats 250. Today there are 13 Kingdom Halls in the Alaska branch territory.

THE QUAKING OF ALASKA

During those years our brothers worked diligently to offer proof to people in the territory that we are living in the last days. Often the householders manifested skepticism and doubt. Suddenly, Jesus' words regarding "earthquakes in one place after another" were driven home with vivid realism here in the north country. (Mark 13:8) On March 27, 1964, Alaska shook as never before! An earthquake that some scientists measured as being 8.6 on the Richter scale struck with a jolt stronger than had ever been recorded in North America. It moved more earth than any other earthquake known. Major portions of Anchorage, Seward, Cordova, Valdez and Kodiak were destroyed, and 115 Alaskans died. Although the Kingdom Hall in Kodiak was carried out to sea, limited damage was done to the property of the brothers. After that event residents had little difficulty understanding the part of Jesus' sign describing earthquakes.

PERSONNEL CHANGE

It was in that same year of the earthquake that the brothers were saddened to hear of the death of Brother Wagner. His kind and fatherly manner was replaced in 1965 with the vigor and zeal of Brother James A. Miller. The Millers continued in full-time service until 1969 when they began to raise a family. Then the Society assigned Brother P. Gerald Ronco to the branch office where he continues to serve as Branch Committee coordi-

nator, supported by the other two members of the Branch Committee, Ralph Ring and Paul Thiessen.

Brother and Sister Ronco have played a fine part in the expansion of the Kingdom work in Alaska. They have served there some 14 years now and have been very effective in helping new ones. Between the two of them they have aided 33 persons into the truth. Their lives are truly wrapped up with people in Jehovah's service and they take great interest in everyone. An outstanding quality displayed by Brother Ronco is his being always available for anyone with a problem. He has spent hundreds of hours hearing the individual and congregational problems of any who would approach him. He has a very warm, cheerful, inviting personality that makes others feel they can approach him with their needs.

CIRCUIT TRAVELS

The steady assistance from traveling overseers has done much to build up the brothers and to provide training. From 1963 to 1979 Brother Robert L. Hartman faithfully visited the congregations in Alaska and the Yukon Territory. Brother Hartman recalls: "When I took up the circuit work in February 1963, in Alaska and the Yukon there were 428 publishers scattered among ten congregations. Reaching the congregations and isolated ones by various means of transportation posed an interesting challenge. I used the auto, commercial jet plane, small bush aircraft, ferryboats and fishing boats to visit our dear brothers and sisters needing to be built up by the circuit overseer."

He tells of Sister Alma Laughlin and her teen-

age son, who were the only Witnesses in the tough logging-fishing town of Wrangell. To visit them required expensive travel by bush plane or long hours by ferryboat plus being housed in an old rooming house. He accompanied Sister Laughlin and her son in preaching from house to house, on return visits and Bible studies, all on foot and often in the soaking rain. But just as the larger congregations did, the two of them needed the visits. On one visit he recalls taking off by bush plane from Sitka, headed for Wrangell:

"Midway on the trip, with rugged mountains and islands on each side and the salt water of the Inside Passage below us, we suddenly ran head-on into a brisk rainstorm. The pilot made a quick about-face and headed back toward our place of origin, the strong winds and rain pounding at our tail. Our turnabout was so abrupt that we seemed like characters in a cartoon drama being pursued by a 'monster' storm. But Alaskan bush pilots do not give up easily. He made a wide circle to the west around several islands, searching for a pass where the storm was not so fierce.

"As we followed this circuitous route, the storm forced us down closer and closer to the surface of the water below. But the pilot forged ahead, skimming 200 feet [60 m] above the water. When he opened the window on his side to see how near we were to the mountain shoreline a few yards away, I couldn't help but wonder if we would reach Wrangell safely. Before long, through the haze ahead, I could barely make out three dim figures waiting with an auto on the shore. Sister Laughlin had hired the lone taxi to meet the plane at the

rural landing spot. For the rest of the week we trudged around in the rain in our field service, but at least we were safe on land."

Brother Hartman continues: "Everyone in that small town was used to seeing Sister Laughlin making her rounds on foot in her Bible teaching work. She continued faithful, living in this isolated town for several years until her husband finally moved them nearer to a congregation. Being able to serve such faithful brothers and sisters for over 16 years in Alaska was an indescribable privilege for me. Although I traveled well over 250,000 miles [400,000 km], many times in storms and with temperatures as low as 60 degrees below zero Fahrenheit [-51° C.], to reach the brothers in the circuit, to share the faith and integrity like that of Sister Laughlin is one of the greatest blessings a person could enjoy. And what a pleasure to have seen the number of publishers of the good news reach more than 1,240 in 23 congregations by the time I left Alaska in 1979!" Today Brother Hartman continues to work as a traveling overseer under the United States branch.

REACHING DISTANT TERRITORY

It is a pleasure to report that 80 percent of the Yukon Territory and the Alaskan field is witnessed to regularly. With more than half of the total population of the branch residing in Anchorage and Fairbanks and the balance in a handful of other towns, the 26 congregations now formed are keeping Jehovah's name before the people. Witnessing does not slow down summer or winter. When the temperature drops lower than 45 degrees below



For over 16 years Robert L. Hartman served the Alaskan brothers as circuit overseer, traveling extensively by all types of vehicles in all kinds of weather

zero Celsius (-50° F.), most of the brothers will write letters or conduct Bible studies and make return visits.

The Alaskan brothers have not lost sight of the 20 percent of the population who live in the distant outlying villages, and their concern is to see to it that these people are contacted with the Kingdom hope. This is very difficult and costly, since no road system connects them with the major cities. In 1970 the branch office divided the unassigned territory among the congregations with the request that they arrange locally to reach the remote areas. In response to that request, in September 1970, two industrious sisters wanted to do their part to reach the isolated inhabitants in the interior of Alaska. One of these sisters had already pioneered in the Eskimo village of Bethel. Depending on her limited knowledge of the Eskimo language, they departed on a commercial barge up the Kuskokwim River. They traded literature for fresh or dried fish along the way. At



Preparing to work bush territory by airplane

Another push into the outlying villages was made by airplane. The brothers knew that the best time to find people in the bush was during the winter when the fishing season is almost at a standstill. Nevertheless, winter storms make flying hazardous. One of these pilots explains:

"The area near Nome and along the Bering Sea is notorious for severe icing and whiteouts. The whiteout is a dreaded foe because it can come with little warning, often beginning with a light overcast and then snow. But soon everything becomes white. A pilot must strain his eyes, peering into the snow. He may lose his orientation, not knowing which way is up or down. Then dizziness sets in and one could easily fly right into a mountain or into the ground. More pilots are lost in this area than anywhere else in Alaska." In spite of these dangers, over a two-year period the brothers covered about 844,000 square kilometers (326,000 sq mi) while visiting more than 200 villages.

In order to help care for the expenses of the 11 Witnesses who went into the bush territory with three airplanes, the local brothers donated more than \$14,000! What a generous spirit in support of preaching the good news and trying to reach all who are desirous of serving Jehovah!

In another project to reach all Alaska in the work of making disciples, the branch office arranged to mail out sample copies of the *Awake!*

first they chose to sleep in a tent outdoors, but the cold forced them to seek shelter indoors.

With such a zealous effort they succeeded in witnessing to more than 15 villages. This required that they work their way up the river by barge for more than 800 kilometers (500 mi). They placed much literature and gave a fine witness during this trip of more than 1,600 kilometers (1,000 mi).

In 1973 one of these sisters and her husband took their sleeping bags and tent to spend three weeks offering the Kingdom message to more of the Eskimo population. They were warmly welcomed by many of the villagers who shared their dried fish, fish head soup and duck soup. More than 500 magazines were placed, and well over 100 subscriptions were obtained. Such zeal is exemplary, but where did this sister get such drive? Her family had learned the truth from those early missionaries.

and *The Watchtower*. In one year the United States branch mailed out for the Alaska branch almost 18,000 magazines to the villages. Every village has been reached with the Kingdom message, either by mail or by personal visits.

Early in 1983 the Alaska branch embarked once again on an extensive witnessing project into the isolated bush villages. With more than ten private airplanes available, plans were made to reach 63 villages with the good news. What a fine opportunity for more than 23,000 people of the Eskimo, Indian and Aleut population to learn of the hope for everlasting life under God's Kingdom! Since the Alaskan territory embraces some 1,525,000 square kilometers (589,000 sq mi) of land with the largest portion unreachable by roads, witnessing in the bush is no small task. For instance, during the month of May 1983, the brothers flew to 17 villages, traveling over 7,720 kilometers (4,800 mi)!

Yet, over the years the brothers have found that they were most productive in making disciples when they concentrated on the densely populated cities and towns. Newcomers who share in the preaching work here no longer have to contend with the primitive living conditions that the old-timers had to endure. Instead, they can now enjoy the benefits of a modern way of life, while carrying out their witnessing work.

A "GREAT CROWD" OUT OF ALL NATIONS, TRIBES, PEOPLES

We are overjoyed to see that at least a sprinkling of the native Indians and Eskimo have re-

sponded to the truth. In harmony with Revelation 7:9 these come in from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues—in Alaska and the Yukon too. The native population are gentle, peace-loving people. They are not complicated in personality and are generally content with the basic needs of life. Here, as in other parts of the earth, the churches of Christendom have produced thousands of rice Christians. The clergy permit the Eskimo and Indians, while embracing so-called Christianity, to cling to superstitions and customs that are not in harmony with God's Word. As for the majority of intensely religious persons, the doctrine of "Once saved, always saved" has made them complacent. A great number of other residents have simply fallen victim to alcohol and drug abuse and claim no religious inclination. But what a pleasure it is to see the various tribes represented among our brothers and sisters and to see their genuine appreciation and zeal for the truth! What evidence of Jehovah's spirit as these are enabled to break free from tribal customs!

Not only have our brothers placed much literature but the example of true Christianity by Jehovah's Witnesses has done much to help others come into God's organization. We recall the work of those early pioneers who placed literature "by the ton," and we appreciate how the symbolic "horses" of Revelation 9:16-19 have penetrated into every corner of this vast land. In the past ten years more than two and a half million copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* have been distributed here, and over 14,000 subscriptions were obtained!

Since the establishing of the Alaska branch of-

fice in 1961, the number of praisers has increased over fourfold to a peak in April 1983 of 1,574. These are cared for by 26 congregations divided into two circuits. The 134 regular and auxiliary pioneers in February 1983 represented 9 percent of the total peak of publishers. With a ratio of one publisher for every 292 people, a grand shout of praise to Jehovah is being sounded. Our 1983 Memorial attendance reached 4,033!

People continue to trek north to Alaska to fulfill their dreams of a better life. Many are disillusioned when the "great land" does not meet their expectations. Others, though, have struck it rich here! They have discovered the spiritual paradise of Jehovah's making that is found among his people. In the past ten years, 1,017 have dedicated themselves to Jehovah here in territory under the Alaska branch. Many have returned to homes in the lower 48 states, happy to share their new-found wealth of spiritual blessings with family and friends.

Like others who have made the journey north, Jehovah's people are seeking treasures, but not the yellow or black gold lying beneath the surface of the ground. They have learned that the true wealth is in the lives of people. The prophet Haggai shows that Jehovah views people who take up true worship as "the desirable things of all the nations." The brothers in this distant corner of the earth thank Jehovah for the privilege of caring for this valuable treasure from all nations and pray that many more from the land of Alaska and the Yukon will come in to fill his house with glory.—Hag. 2:7.

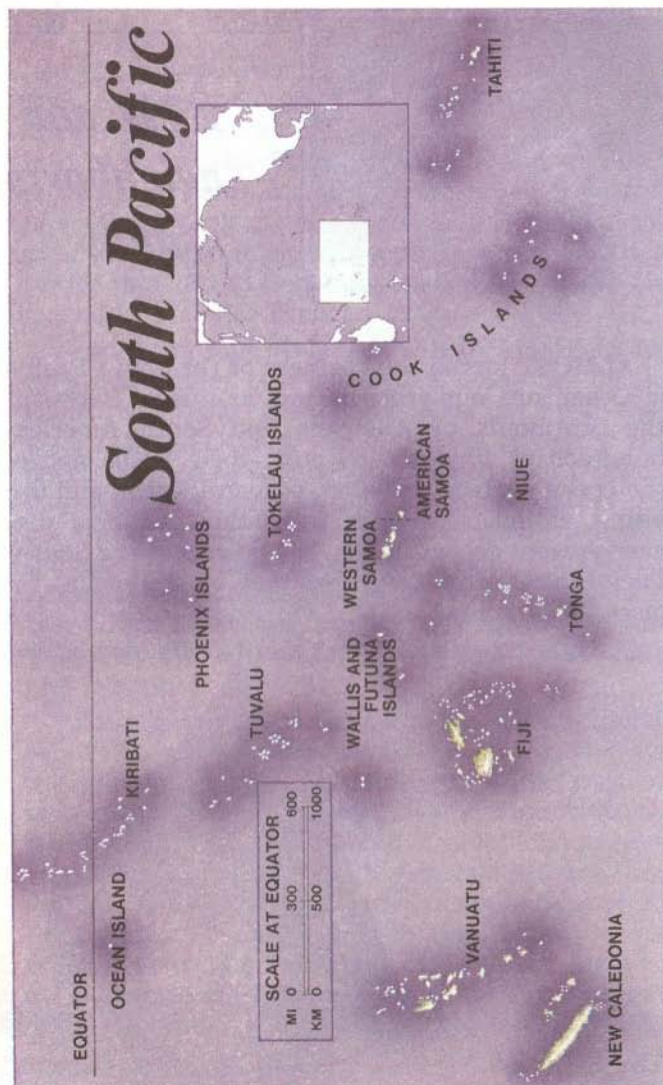


Fiji and neighboring islands

ALMOST lost in the vastness of the South Pacific Ocean are numerous island countries. Between the continents of Australia and South America hundreds of tiny islands push their heads above the ocean surface. Isolated, peaceful, warm and inviting, clothed with lush vegetation including the ever-present coconut palm, the islands of the South Pacific have often been described by visitors as "a piece of paradise."

Some of these islands are mere atolls only a few





feet above sea level. Larger islands, thrust up from the ocean floor by volcanic or seismic disturbances, have mountains over 1,800 meters high (6,000 ft) and fairly large rivers flowing across them. Small native villages, ranging in size from a few families to hundreds of inhabitants, lie scattered around the sheltered coastal areas, usually beside rivers or streams, and there are also some larger towns and cities.

Religiously, the Methodist, London Missionary Society, Roman Catholic and Anglican organizations predominate in the islands. Christendom's missionaries arrived in the 1800's, and in more recent years many smaller Protestant groups started to be active here.

THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Years ago the islands were very much isolated from the rest of the world. No airplane services here then! Links with the outside world were confined to infrequent calls by passenger and cargo ships, perhaps once a month or less.

The islanders come from different backgrounds, such as Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian. But mostly they have similar basic attitudes. Friendly, easygoing and casual in their approach to life, they enjoy each day, being content with few of this world's goods. Often the native way of viewing life frustrates those of European background, most of whom are conditioned to get ahead materially.

COORDINATING THE WORK IN A FAR-FLUNG FIELD

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society's branch in Australia, from its formation in 1904, di-

rected the work throughout the South Pacific, and this oversight continued until 1958, when a branch office was formed in Suva, the capital of Fiji.

The countries that came under the new branch were Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides), Western Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Tahiti, Tuvalu (formerly the Ellice Islands), Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands), Tokelau and the Cook Islands.

One thing that has hampered the progress of the Kingdom work in the South Pacific is the isolation of the various island territories. Fiji, situated in a central position in relation to the other islands in the branch territory, serves as a hublike center with the other islands radiating outward from it like the spokes of a giant wheel. Thus if one was to travel from Fiji in an easterly direction, one would reach Tonga after about 700 kilometers (430 mi), Niue after 960 kilometers (600 mi) and Tahiti after 3,540 kilometers (2,200 mi).

Traveling northeast from Fiji, after 1,350 kilometers (840 mi), one would arrive at the Samoa Islands. Then, about 1,100 kilometers (680 mi) to the north of Fiji is the Tuvalu group of islands and about the same distance again to the north from Tuvalu is the main group of the islands of Kiribati. Just over 960 kilometers (600 mi) in a westerly direction from Fiji brings the traveler to Vanuatu, and 1,120 kilometers (700 mi) brings him to New Caledonia. From east to west the territory stretches over some 4,800 kilometers (3,000 mi) of ocean! Due to the location of the international date line, Jehovah's Witnesses in Fiji are among

the first each year to celebrate the Memorial of Jesus' death, and those in Samoa are among the last, some 23 hours later.

The Fiji branch at one time supervised the Kingdom work in 12 countries, the greatest number of countries under any one branch. The office handled 13 major languages. Circuit and district overseers traveled as much as 4,800 kilometers (3,000 mi) between the extremities of the territory, constantly coping with immigration regulations.

To give us some insight into the work of preaching the good news in these island groups, let us look a little into each of their backgrounds. Then we will see how the good news got started and how it has progressed to the present day under Jehovah's guiding hand. We will start with Fiji, the largest of them all.

FIJI ISLANDS GROUP

In the Fiji Islands group there are more than 300 islands, about one third of which are inhabited. This makes up a total land area of 18,275 square kilometers (7,056 sq mi). Formerly a British Crown Colony, it has been a self-governing nation since 1970. The islands are beautiful, with mountains and rich soil.

The original inhabitants, called Fijians, make up about 40 percent of the population. They are a dark-skinned race of Melanesian descent. Previously fierce, warlike cannibals (at one time Fiji was known as the Cannibal Islands), they are now civilized and most are converted to nominal Christianity.

About 50 percent of the population are descend-

ed from laborers brought from India to work on the sugar plantations. Though many Indians still work in the cane fields, a large number of them are now shopkeepers and business people. There is also a dwindling population of Europeans, as well as a small number of Chinese, and there are groups from almost all the other islands of the South Pacific. This makes Fiji a real melting pot.

Suva, the capital, is a fast-developing city with an estimated population of more than 100,000. Fiji now has a total population of more than 600,000. About half the inhabitants are either Hindus or Muslims, with the rest belonging to 20 sects of Christendom.

FIJI HEARS THE GOOD NEWS

How did the good news come to these islands? It seems that some of the Watch Tower Society's publications reached Fiji as early as the first decade of this century. The first active witness of Jehovah arrived in 1913. He was transferred here from Sri Lanka by his employer. When on leave, this brother went to the United States and attended a convention of the Bible Students. He brought back with him the *Photo-Drama of Creation* and showed it to packed audiences in Fiji. Lectures were translated into Fijian, and showings were held in large towns and country areas.

Reporting on one of the showings, the *Fiji Times* of June 28, 1915, commented: "The second part of this series of religious pictures was screened at the Universal Theatre last night. From about 6.30 p.m. hundreds lined the Post Office verandah and pavement or stood in groups under the ivi tree [native

chestnut]. The doors were opened at 7.30 p.m. and five minutes after the hall was packed." After this no preaching was reported for about 15 years.

TWO PIONEERS DISTRIBUTE MUCH LITERATURE

In 1930 Andy Auchterlonie and A. L. McGregor arrived in the islands. After doing house-to-house work in Suva, they traveled by boat around the coast from Suva to the western side of the main island, Viti Levu (Big Fiji). They left a great quantity of Bible literature with people throughout the island, witnessing to all they could talk to.

With the aid of a Fijian guide and a dugout canoe they traveled into the interior of Viti Levu, placing hundreds of copies of booklets in the Fijian language. They also carried out preaching on the island of Vanua Levu (Big Land), the second largest of the Fiji Islands. Using a boat, they contacted most of the villagers there and distributed much literature.

FRUITAGE RESULTS

One contact that bore fruit was the family of Leonard Heatley. He tells us: "Being part Fijian, my father, Edward, had an excellent knowledge of both the English and Fijian languages and had done translating work for various organizations. He accepted a cash offer to translate the booklet entitled *Hell*. But no cash was ever paid for the work, since my father had accepted the truth by the time he finished the translation of the booklet! He resigned from the Catholic Church and till the day of his death in 1959 was a staunch supporter of the Kingdom work.

"He translated six booklets, the book *Deliverance* and many transcription record Bible talks by Brother Rutherford into Fijian. These were made into records in the Fijian language and played to thousands of Fijians in scores of villages, using a transcription machine." Leonard Heatley himself became Fiji's first Gilead graduate.

Further fruitage resulted when Harry and Louisa Scott (now both deceased) accepted the good news. Said Sister Scott: "A friend of my husband, Ted Heatley, called on us one evening and played one of Brother Rutherford's recorded Bible talks. The simplicity and clearness of the message appealed to us. We accepted it as the truth." The third family that took up the truth at the same time was the Marriott family, all three families (Heatleys, Scotts and Marriotts) were the fruitage of those two early pioneers.

OTHER PIONEERS COME TO FIJI

After Brothers Auchterlonie and McGregor returned home, the Australia branch assigned other pioneers to work in Fiji. Around 1933 a pioneer brother walked, cycled, rode and boated over most of Fiji, placing thousands of pieces of literature. Unfortunately this brother later left the truth, but seeds of truth had been widely sown.

Brother Eric Ewins tells of his first contact with the message of truth from that pioneer: "It was the most difficult time of my life: My wife had recently died and I had a 12-month-old son to care for. I recall having asked a clergyman the reason for such happenings, and he replied that God wanted her in heaven, so he took her. The

situation distressed me so much that I asked God to let me die, as I could see no sense in life under such conditions.

"Just a few days later a stranger walked into my office and, after introducing himself, opened up like this: 'In 1914 there was war in heaven and Satan and his demons were cast down to the earth. Since then they have been preparing all nations to fight against God at the battle of Armageddon, when they will be destroyed, and God's Kingdom under Christ will rule the earth forever.' I was immediately struck by the dynamic nature of the message, so different from what the churches handed out.

"I invited the Witness to stay with me for a few days. This he did, and we discussed the message into the wee hours of the morning. It didn't take me many days to be convinced that this was the truth and that it was God's answer to my desperate prayer." Brother Ewins joined in association with the original three local Witness families.

A SOUND CAR IS PUT TO USE

During 1937 a sound car was introduced into the islands and operated for about six months on the island of Viti Levu. Years later, brothers met people who still remembered that sound car. A native village elder in the 1950's said: "They were courageous. They used to come and park their car on the bank of the river and the message blared across to all of us here in the village. We heard everything: 'The Devil leads them all. The religious leaders teach lies. The Bible teaches the truth. God's Kingdom is man's hope. No hellfire.' Yes, in both languages, English and Fijian!"

William Checksfield
stuck to his missionary
assignment in Fiji until his
death in 1962



J. F. RUTHERFORD VISITS FIJI

In May 1938 the Society's president at that time, J. F. Rutherford, spent one day in Fiji while on a tour of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. The Town Hall in Suva had been booked weeks in advance and extensive publicity had been given to the public talk to be delivered by Brother Rutherford. But on the day of his arrival, the authorities closed the hall to the brothers. Unable to use the Town Hall, Brother Rutherford nonetheless held meetings with the few local brothers, and about 40 people were present for his talk in a private home. Though the police closely followed Brother Rutherford wherever he went that day, he succeeded in greatly encouraging the brothers in Fiji.

BAN IMPOSED ON BIBLE LITERATURE

In 1936 Fiji had passed legislation prohibiting the importation of some of the Society's Bible literature. Then, with the outbreak of World War II, the colonial government imposed a ban on all the

Society's literature. The ban resulted in some books being destroyed. For example, in January 1939 the Comptroller of Customs destroyed the entire shipment of the book *Deliverance* in Fijian. The brothers, however, still managed to get some literature into the country and remain spiritually well fed. Sister Scott related one way this was done:

"Brother Ashcroft worked as a doctor's assistant on a passenger ship traveling between Australia and Canada. He would pick up a supply of literature in Sydney, and when the ship called at Suva, some of the brothers would go on board with coats on, stuff booklets in their inside pockets and then walk down the gangway to a waiting car. After a while the brothers made other trips up the gangway until all Brother Ashcroft's stock was exhausted.

"Once, Brother Ashcroft arrived with a large shipment, and we could not get it ashore by the usual method. So Sister Tupe Marriott borrowed a Chinese market gardener's rowboat and rowed across the harbor at night to the wharf where the *Niagara* was berthed. She pretended to fish and then said in a loud voice to her young son who was with her, 'Let's move over to this side (away from the wharf), there seem to be more fish here.' This was the signal for Brother Ashcroft to lower a number of cartons of literature down the side of the ship. Sister Marriott then rowed back across the harbor with a full load of 'fish.'"

The Australian branch office made repeated efforts to have the restrictions removed. In 1940 Harold E. Gill was sent to Fiji, and he made a forthright appeal to the governor. However, the

work soon came under a complete ban, as in most of the British Commonwealth at that time.

RESTRICTIONS REMOVED

In 1945, as a result of the brothers' petitioning the government, the ban on the preaching activity was lifted, and the publications could enter Fiji subject to prior scrutiny and acceptance by the governor-in-council. Then, in 1959, a further easing of the restriction took place. Literature was allowed in, as long as a copy of any new publication entering the islands was supplied to the commissioner of police. In 1970 the prime minister lifted all restrictions.

ARRIVAL OF GILEAD GRADUATES

Though some work was done during the years up to World War II, during the war the work came to a virtual standstill. In 1946 the Society's president, N. H. Knorr, and his secretary, M. G. Henschel, stopped at Fiji and each gave a talk to the small group of brothers. Brother Knorr disclosed that the Society would be sending missionaries from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. On April 5, 1947, William Checksfield, a rugged English brother, and Cecil Bruhn, an Australian, both graduates of Gilead's eighth class, arrived in Fiji. "To welcome us," Brother Bruhn recalls, "were members of three families who were the only Witnesses in the islands." Brother Ewins, now remarried and raising a family, had also returned to Fiji after an absence of eight years.

FIRST CONGREGATION FORMED

In September 1947 the first congregation in Fiji was officially formed in Suva. It was made up of the

two missionaries, Sister Connie Clark and members of the Ewins, Heatley, Marriott and Scott families.

With the help of the missionaries, the congregation gradually increased from 9 to 37 publishers over the next five years. One of the new ones was a man from Tuvalu, Foua Tofinga, who became the first Tuvaluan to accept the truth and be baptized. He is still serving Jehovah faithfully, now being one of the three members of the Fiji Branch Committee.

Brother Bruhn recalls that it was impossible at that time for the missionaries to spread the good news to the other islands, but Brother Harry Scott filled the need and spread the message far and wide. How was this possible? Sister Scott explained: "My husband was the captain of the *Adi Beti* (Lady Betty), the official yacht of Fiji's governors. So wherever the yacht went, there went Bible literature! On many of Fiji's widely scattered islands the only contact people had with the truth was the literature placed this way."

Unfortunately Brother Bruhn was forced to return to Australia in 1949 due to health problems. Brother Checksfield continued on and became very well known throughout the main island of Viti Levu. He was able to help and train the brothers, including youngsters Len Heatley and Eunice Marriott, who was only 12 years old when the missionaries arrived.

In March 1951 Brothers Knorr and Henschel again visited Suva and encouraged the brothers. That same month saw 30 out in the field—a new peak of publishers.

FIJI'S FIRST REGULAR PIONEER

Eunice Marriott was much affected by this visit and was to become Fiji's first regular pioneer. She tells us: "Numerous youngsters who were reared in the truth by God-fearing parents often need an outstanding experience to move them to respond to what the truth is all about. In 1951 I was very interested in obtaining advanced secular education, and like many here, desirous of moving from this small island country to a larger one. So my sister and brother-in-law in New Zealand were making arrangements for me to go there for more advanced studies. While I was waiting to finalize arrangements for the trip, Brothers Knorr and Henschel visited Fiji.

"Brother Knorr gave a discourse in which he discussed the courageous Bible character Daniel whose life really impressed me. Being young, I remember sliding farther and farther down into my seat so as not to be seen by Brother Knorr with his authoritative manner and, as it seemed to me, piercing eyes. After the talk Brother Henschel personally and encouragingly discussed with me the pioneer and missionary service. 'Brother Henschel,' I said, 'if I went to Gilead, I would not want to be assigned to tiny islands, such as Fiji.' He took me to a wall map of the world and said that they might send me to Brazil, where millions of people live. So encouraged was I to make pioneering my goal in life that I canceled the arrangements to go to New Zealand and began to pioneer.

A group of early publishers in Fiji
(about 1956)



Foa Tofinga, one of Brother Checksfield's early Bible students. He is now a member of the Fiji Branch Committee

"I did not ever get to go to Gilead School since pioneers were and still are needed in Fiji, but I have enjoyed every minute of my service here. After being in the pioneer service for 27 years, I was privileged to accompany my husband [Don Clare] to Brooklyn in 1978 while he attended the special Gilead course for Branch Committee members. We wives were overjoyed to be permitted to sit in for two hours of Bible discussions each day."

Others followed her example, and the next year



Donald Clare,
present Branch
Committee
coordinator, and
his wife, Eunice,
who was Fiji's first
pioneer



(1952) Lydia Pedro and Len Heatley began pioneering. These three young pioneers, Lydia, Len and Eunice, labored alongside Brother Checksfield in building up the Suva Congregation. From these 3 the pioneer ranks have increased until there are now 90 pioneers in Fiji alone and 130 in the whole branch territory. Two of the first three pioneers are still in full-time work. The third, Sister Lydia Pedro, died in New Zealand in 1969.

MORE MISSIONARIES ARRIVE

Don Clare, the present Branch Committee coordinator, first sighted Fiji in 1952 on his way to Gilead School by ship with 16 other students from Australia. Said Brother Clare: "I remember standing on the deck of an ocean liner and viewing, for the first time, Suva harbor, surrounded by beautiful hills and clothed in deep, many-hued greens. I thought: 'What a lovely place for a missionary to work!' We spent that day with a small band of about 20 local publishers and one lone missionary, Brother Bill Checksfield. It was a most enjoyable day. All 17 of us expressed our thoughts that Fiji would be a grand missionary assignment."

What happened? Brother Clare continues: "As our course of study drew to a close in July of 1952, we anxiously awaited announcement of our missionary assignments. What a delightful surprise it was for four of us, Harold and Lena Cater, Clive Taylor and me, to learn that we had been assigned to Fiji! And what a bigger surprise we received when we were asked to take up secular work in order to get into the colony of Fiji."

Why was this necessary? Well, for a number of years the Society had made applications for missionaries to enter Fiji. The government continued to reject them. So a new method had to be used to get these four Gilead graduates into Fiji. They were to enter as tourists and then endeavor to obtain secular work. This they did in March 1953. They were instructed not to attend meetings for some months and to witness only out of town to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Eventually, though, they began to increase their theocratic activity and were able to assist the sole missionary, Brother Checksfield.

"I have always been convinced that the Society's sending us to Fiji at that time was directed by Jehovah," Brother Clare recalls. "For us to obtain residency so we could take up missionary service, we had to remain exclusively in Fiji, doing full-time secular work for five years. In later years brothers from Australia, Canada and England came to Fiji to serve where the need is greater, but they all had trouble with the Immigration Department once it was learned they were Witnesses. The result was that they had to leave the colony when their permits expired."

WITNESSING IN FIJI

Brother Cater describes the work at that time: "The people were friendly and had the underlying island-style philosophy of *malua* or 'tomorrow will do.' Most of the year the climate was hot and humid. Rural areas up to that time had received very little attention, so this is where we started our preaching. It was difficult at first, for here most of the people spoke little English and we were still attending Fijian language classes. Soon, though, I was able to give short talks in Fijian. The public meeting work in the villages grew, and we were able to encourage a Fijian brother to accompany us. The procedure was to contact the village headman, witness to him and arrange through him for a place to give the public talk. After the talk it was thatched-hut-to-thatched-hut work. No doorbells here! Instead of chairs, mats on the floor were offered."

MISSIONARIES GAIN RESIDENCY

After five years of doing secular work, the four Gilead graduates who had arrived in 1953 gained residency, and Brothers Clare and Taylor took up the full-time preaching work again. Brother and Sister Cater stayed on for some years, helping the brothers to maturity. They then had to return to Australia in 1960 after the birth of their son.

SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER

In the early 1950's the call went out for brothers to serve where the need was greater—in the islands. Over the next few years many brothers from Australia responded to this invitation. They influenced the growth of the work a great deal. At

one time 120 such brothers and sisters were in Fiji. Many of them learned the Fijian language so they could help the people to the greatest extent possible. Thus a number of congregations were started with such families as a nucleus. The second congregation was formed at Lautoka in 1956. Later on one was formed at Navua and in 1958 one at Mba (Ba). Today there are 24 congregations throughout Fiji as well as isolated publishers on some of the more distant islands.

It was not easy for these brothers to serve where the need was greater. Not only did they have the problems associated with moving to a new land, but the immigration authorities would deport them if they found out that they were Witnesses. Thus the brothers had to remain inconspicuous for some months. Then, when they got established in their secular work, they would gradually begin associating with the local Witnesses and eventually get into a full witnessing schedule.

Learning to understand the island people was another challenge. Here life is relaxed. A Bible student may make an appointment for a study but often fail to keep it. Why? It is just the island way. They live very much for the present; the past is forgotten, the future blissfully ignored. Whatever comes along on the spur of the moment gets attention, regardless of its relative importance.

The politeness of the islanders can also pose a problem for outsiders. Showing respect is still basic in the islanders' way of life. Hence, at times an islander will tell you what he thinks *you* want to hear, rather than what *he* feels. This means that

one has to be a good teacher, having insight and being full of discernment.

When circuit overseers work country territory, they may ask: "How far do we have to walk to the next village?" The island brother knows it is, say, eight kilometers (5 mi). But the European circuit overseer is tired. So, rather than see a look of downheartedness on his brother's face, out of the sheer goodness of his heart, sincerely wanting to be helpful and encouraging, the island brother will say: "About one mile [1.5 km]." Many are the overseas brothers who have walked the longest "mile" in their lives because of this!

FIRST CIRCUIT VISITS

In 1955 the Australia branch assigned Len Helberg to be Fiji's first circuit overseer. He also visited brothers in Western Samoa, American Samoa and New Caledonia, and he was able to get the work going in Tonga and Tahiti.

Circuit work in the islands involved much travel in small vessels sometimes called pig-and-chicken boats because of the variety of cargo they carried. The passengers fitted in wherever they could among the livestock, timber and foodstuffs. Some vessels were better than others, but they did not hold to set schedules. Thus the circuit overseer could find himself isolated for a month or more on some island waiting for the next boat.

When serving cities, the circuit overseer may stay in a modern home with all the comforts of hot and cold running water, flush toilets and a bed. The following week he may be in a village where he sleeps on a mat on the floor and where

bathing facilities may be a creek or a bucket of water poured over himself out in the open.

FIJI'S FIRST DISTRICT CONVENTION

Fiji's first district convention was the Triumphant Kingdom Convention, held in Suva in 1956. Two days before the convention, Suva was given a cyclone warning. Homes and buildings were battered down, roads were flooded and impassable, and all plane service was suspended as the cyclone drew closer. But the night before the convention the cyclone swung away from Suva, and calm weather greeted the opening day.

The plane bringing Brother Don Adams from the Society's headquarters to Fiji was delayed due to the bad weather. When it arrived, the brothers brought him to Suva by a four-wheel drive vehicle and, after wading across a flooded river in chest-high water, delivered him to the convention site just one hour before he was to give the public talk!

From then on, the brothers have had fairly regular conventions, which have contributed overwhelmingly to the growth of the work and the spiritual upbuilding of Jehovah's people.

USING THE FIJIAN LANGUAGE IN MEETINGS

Up until this time English was used in all the meetings. But it was not easy for some of the brothers to give talks in English. So in 1957 the zone overseer recommended the use of Fijian in the congregations, and this was done the following year. Also, a Fijian supplement to the Australian edition of *Our Kingdom Ministry* was published each month. This proved to be very helpful.

A NEW BRANCH IS FORMED

On September 1, 1958, supervision of the Kingdom interests in the South Pacific was turned over to a new branch in Suva, Fiji. Len Helberg, a graduate of Gilead School's 31st class, became the first branch overseer. Len Heatley, who became the first local Gilead graduate, assisted him and shared in the traveling work. To start with, the branch office was located in a room at Brother Eric Ewins' home in Suva. Later a small two-bedroom house in Suva was rented.

In 1960 Don Clare, who in 1954 had married Eunice Marriott, Fiji's first local pioneer, became the branch overseer and continues today as Branch Committee coordinator. Len Helberg had to return to Australia, and Len Heatley has continued until now in various avenues of full-time service.

PROBLEMS FACING THE NEW BRANCH OFFICE

Imagine the problems that faced the new branch office. There were then eight different island territories to administer. They used different currencies, spoke many different languages and were divided by the international date line. Moreover, each island group was under a different government. Further aggravating the problems was the slowness of the mail services. It would take up to ten weeks to receive a reply to a letter from some areas of the branch territory.

Nevertheless, the direct administration of the whole island field by the new branch office, under the guiding influence of Jehovah's spirit, greatly accelerated the work. In the first year of its oper-



Leonard Heatley and his wife, Clara. He was Fiji's first Gilead graduate and is still pioneering

ation, the number of publishers in Fiji alone rose from 111 to 176.

TRUTH OVERCOMES DEMONISM

Though most of the Fijian population belong to one of the churches of Christendom, some still follow their old ways that involve demonism, such as religious fire walking.

Seremaia Raibe became involved with demonism after he left school, joining a group known as the *Vukea* (Helper). This group believed they would be given power over death. He would take part in drinking kava (a native drink that numbs the mind and body) until the early hours of the morning in order to contact the demons and receive power to overcome death.

One day in 1957 Brother Checksfield called on him. The missionary used the Bible to explain the reasons for critical world conditions. Seremaia became so interested that he began reading the Bible even though the *Vukea* had tried to discredit it. When he read at John 5:28 that the resurrection would be through Jesus Christ, he realized that the

teachings of the *Vukea* were wrong. When the head of the sect died—something Seremaia had thought impossible—he left the group and abandoned demonism. He was baptized in 1958, began pioneering and helped to start the work on Niue. Today he is an elder in New Zealand.

INGATHERING AIDED BY USE OF FIJIAN LANGUAGE

As a result of the use of the Fijian language at the meetings, more Fijians came into the truth. A monthly edition of *The Watchtower* began to be published in Fijian in July 1961. A number of booklets were also made available in the vernacular.

Taking a lead in this translation work was Brother Aminiasi Cakau. Though he had a large family, he often translated into the early hours of the morning. In the last few years of his life he served as a member of the Branch Committee until his death in December 1980.

A present member of the Branch Committee is Brother Emosi Laucala, who learned the truth from his aunt. In 1960 this Fijian woman started studying the Bible while in Suva and then returned to her village. When her father died, she was put to some spiritual tests by the people of the village because of her new faith and because she no longer feared the dead. Several others, observing her faith, began to listen to what she told them from the Bible. One of these was her nephew, Emosi, who was a Seventh-Day Adventist. He followed her to Suva after she returned and wanted to look into her "church." He had a Bible study every day during the week he was in town, started attending

meetings and then went home with publications. He was baptized in 1962.

LOSS OF FIJI'S FIRST MISSIONARY

Also in 1962, during the district convention in Lautoka, Fiji's first missionary, Brother Checksfield, died. He had served faithfully in the Fijian field for 15 years and had seen Jehovah bless his efforts. At times he had conducted more than 20 Bible studies each week.

Over the years the Fijian brothers had been concerned that Brother Checksfield would return to England, but he always replied that he had no desire to return, for there was no better place on earth for him than Fiji. A fine example of a missionary's sticking to his assignment!

CONVENTIONS BRING THE BROTHERS TOGETHER

Occasionally an interisland convention is held, bringing brothers together from all over the South Pacific. In 1963 the first large international convention was held in Suva, as one of the 24 different lands represented in the chain of around-the-world conventions bearing the theme "Everlasting Good News." Many from other countries under the branch came and joined with the brothers in Fiji. What a joy it was to meet face to face for the first time, after having heard so much about one another!

In their friendly way, the island brothers fellowshipped for the five days of the convention. How thrilled, too, they were to associate with brothers from the Society's headquarters, including Brothers F. W. Franz and Grant Suiter. The public talk, given by Brother Franz, was attended by 1,080 people,

almost double the number at any previous convention in Fiji. Twenty-five were baptized, the fruitage of the ministry in a number of different countries. Sessions were held in four languages, English, Fijian, French and Samoan. The convention was an outstanding event in the early days of theocratic progress in Fiji.

THOSE FROM CHIEFLY FAMILIES ACCEPT THE TRUTH

In Fijian society, some families are of a chiefly background, having earned that distinction many years ago through deeds in war. They bear names such as Ratu and Ro for men and Adi and Bulu for women. These names are passed on from parents to children through the male line, and persons bearing them are highly regarded.

When those from chiefly families learn the truth, they make many changes in order to live in harmony with Jesus' words: "All you are brothers." (Matt. 23:8) Often much opposition comes their way as the experience of Sister Alisi Dranidalo shows:

"My family, from the village of Lovoni on the island of Ovalau, opposed me. My father was especially opposed since he bears a chiefly title and was very involved in the village religious life. When I left my secular work in 1962 to go pioneering in the Ellice Islands [now Tuvalu], he disowned me. For nearly eight years he did not even open letters that I sent to him. During one vacation I went home, but throughout my two-week stay I just viewed myself as a stranger, not as his daughter, doing all things with deep respect (as is the Fijian custom when one is a stranger).

"However, due to my Christian conduct, not because of my witnessing to him, my father in time asked me to come and study with the family. One of my brothers and one sister are now in the truth, and my father is very favorably disposed. He has broken his ties with the church and attends meetings and assemblies."

Sister Alisi Dranidalo is now a special pioneer, doing much fine work both in the field and in translation work.

NEW BRANCH FACILITY

In 1965 Brother Knorr visited Fiji and served at the "Fruitage of the Spirit" District Convention. At that time he approved the purchase of some property in Suva with a view to building a branch office and Kingdom Hall. Steps were taken to register the work legally, and this was done in 1966 under the name of the International Bible Students Association.

Suitable property was difficult to find, but eventually land was purchased near the business section of Suva. When the building was completed in May 1969, it became a fine witness to all. At the dedication 632 were present, squeezing into the Kingdom Hall designed for only 250 persons. The local brothers were deeply moved upon learning that the money for the land came from brothers in New Zealand and that the funds for the building itself came from the brothers in Australia. The branch building is a split-level, three-story structure. The top story is office and Bethel home, and the Kingdom Hall was below that. The ground floor was for literature storage and a garage.

Fiji branch office
at 66 Robertson
Road, Suva



CONSTRUCTING AN ASSEMBLY FACILITY

Over the years assemblies have been held in various public buildings, but many times it has been necessary for the brothers to construct the entire assembly facilities. For example, in 1970 at the "Men of Goodwill" District Convention the brothers in Fiji's western districts built the entire assembly facilities at the town of Mba. Working mostly on the weekends, they built two large thatched-roof auditoriums with bamboo seating, as well as six other smaller buildings. It took them three months, but they were well rewarded when 842 attended the public talk and 22 were baptized.

INDEPENDENCE FOR FIJI

On October 10, 1970, after 96 years as a British Crown Colony, Fiji became an independent nation. This event affected the work in Fiji, since the new government's aim was to have local people occupy the secular positions then being held by foreigners. Many of the brothers who had come here to serve where the need is greater and had obtained secular work returned home, as local people took over their positions.

Some of the brothers who had been serving in

Fiji for many years had to decide whether they would become Fijian citizens or not. That is what some of the brothers did. Among such was a Gilead graduate, Brother Clare, who continues serving in the branch office.

GROWTH IN MORE RECENT YEARS

In 1970 Memorial attendance was 1,226, but in 1983 it rose to 3,061. Up until the end of the 1970's, about ten congregations had been formed in Suva and the larger towns. But with more native Fijians accepting the truth, the next ten years saw another 11 congregations formed.

During 1977 the work spread out to more of the untouched villages and islands. Special pioneers opened up four new areas and established three congregations. But it is difficult to spread the work throughout Fiji's 106 inhabited islands. Once Fijian special pioneers leave their own villages, they are not usually welcomed in other villages unless someone from that village invites them.

On one occasion an elderly man called at the branch office requesting that a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses be assigned to his island. He was a former Methodist minister but was dissatisfied with his religion and others he had encountered. Having had contact with the Witnesses on the main island, he thought they had the best religion he had found so far. Since he offered accommodations, a special pioneer couple were assigned to visit the island. They witnessed in eight villages, spending two weeks there. It turned out that the elderly man was the paramount chief of the island, and he told his people to listen to Jehovah's Witnesses.

FAITHFUL STAND BRINGS RESULTS

The village communal system has a tight hold on people in Fiji. Previously it was virtually impossible for a person to become a Witness unless he moved out of the village. The situation is now changing. In the past, people used to run into the bush when they saw the Witnesses approaching a village. But the brothers' high moral standards, their clean living habits and their persistent preaching are now causing many to respond.

Illustrating this is the experience of Sister Losavati Rokomarama. She learned the truth in Suva. Her husband did not share her new belief, and shortly thereafter he returned to his village on the island of Ngau. There the family lives in the largest village on the island.

In the years that followed, Losavati remained firm in her belief and through informal witnessing continued to spread the good news. Each month she mailed her report to the branch office. Every Sunday she had the *Watchtower* study with her young children despite the taunts of the rest of the village, as they all went to the Methodist church. As time passed, her husband joined her in the *Watchtower* study and slowly accepted the truth. Then, through her informal witnessing, her brother-in-law and sister-in-law also left the church, and along with the children in the families, the four of them gathered each week for the study.

At one time two special pioneer brothers were assigned to that area, and they stayed with Sister Losavati Rokomarama and her husband. As a result of their zealous witnessing, the village became

stirred up against them, and the minister called a meeting of all the villagers at the church. The minister ordered the newly interested husband of Sister Rokomarama to turn the special pioneers out of his house. This he refused to do, boldly telling all of them that the pioneers were invited by him and they would continue to stay with him!

Though special pioneers are no longer assigned to that island, the small group are still meeting regularly and six are reporting field service each month.

CARING FOR AN OUTER ISLAND

Three isolated publishers live on a large island about 120 kilometers (75 mi) from the main island of Viti Levu. Circuit overseers regularly visit these publishers even though getting there may take more than a day. The circuit overseer has to take a small cargo boat to get to the island, which has virtually no roads and no electricity. When he arrives at one end of the island, he has to wait for many hours as the boat goes into numerous bays along the coast, unloading and loading produce and people. At his destination, he gets into a small dinghy that takes him to the water's edge. Then he struggles through the mud flats, carrying his baggage. After walking several miles through the bush, he finally reaches the home of one of the brothers.

However, the effort is well rewarded, as he sees the brothers' appreciation and joy when they talk together, share in the witnessing work and hold meetings. One circuit overseer fondly recalls a departure from the island when a Witness family

stood in the sea, up to their waists in the water, waving good-bye until his boat was out of sight.

So, by various means the good news is being spread far and wide throughout the islands, even though circumstances make it impossible to assign pioneers to all the places where they are needed.

CYCLONES AFFECT THE BROTHERS

From about November to April each year, Fiji is the target of tropical storms (hurricanes) known locally as cyclones. Over the years these have caused much damage and loss of life, and the brothers have naturally been affected.

Many are the times that relief supplies have been distributed to brothers who lost home and crops from flooding and landslides. The local brothers have learned to care for one another during such disasters.

FIRST MISSIONARY PERMIT SINCE 1947

The year 1978 was a big one for the small branch. Due to several changes and the death of one of the circuit overseers, Brother Manoa Baro, a great need arose for traveling overseers. No local brothers were trained for this work. So it was decided to apply to the government for a permit to allow an experienced circuit overseer to come from overseas. The branch had applied many times before, but no permits for missionaries had been granted for over 30 years!

Great was the gratitude to Jehovah when it was learned that permission had been granted for a brother, Vaughan Guy, along with his wife, Jeanne, to enter Fiji for a three-year period to serve as

a traveling overseer. Now the local brothers have been given much training, and some new circuit overseers have taken up the work.

WITNESSING TO INDIANS

Many of the Indians who came to Fiji as laborers remained here and have raised large families. The majority of them practice the Hindu religion, and the remainder are Muslims. Throughout Fiji the Indians run most of the businesses, and many of them have leased land and grow sugarcane. Only a few of the Indians, by comparison, have accepted the truth, and the publishers are made up almost entirely of local Fijians and those from nearby islands.

The Indian, however, is very hospitable. When witnessing to one, especially in the rural areas, the publisher will be invited inside the home. Invariably he will be offered either a cool drink or warm, milky, sweet tea. The Indian householder will almost always accept literature, as it is part of his belief never to be rude to anyone who is speaking about God. He is hardworking, ambitious and usually maintains a close-knit family arrangement. This is another reason that it is very difficult for young Indians to accept the truth.

The Hindu religion, to which most Indians belong, also makes it difficult for them to learn the truth. It is common to hear them say: "All religions are good and pleasing to God." However, some from this background, such as Hari Narain who is now an elder, have learned the truth and are serving faithfully in the congregations.

In the western district town of Tavua a broth-

er, formerly a Muslim, and his wife are having a fine time studying with Indian people. At the 1980 district convention in Lautoka a married couple, both former Hindus, were baptized. Thus, progress is being made in reaching the Indian population, so that Hindi, in addition to English and Fijian, has been featured on the program of the last two district conventions; and 255 attended the Hindi-language public talk at the "Kingdom Truth" District Convention.

JEHOVAH'S BLESSING MANIFEST

The evidence of Jehovah's blessing on the preaching and teaching work over the years is clearly manifest. From the 12 publishers in 1947, when the first Gilead graduates arrived, the truth has spread so that in June 1983 an all-time peak of 819 was reached. The "Kingdom Truth" District Convention was our largest convention ever, with an attendance of 2,905, and 47 were baptized, compared with 50 for the entire 1982 service year. Great potential is seen in the fact that the 1983 Memorial attendance of 3,061 was more than three and a half times the number of peak publishers!

To keep pace with expansion, the congregations moved out of the Kingdom Hall at the Suva branch office, and the hall was converted in 1983 into three private offices and a literature and shipping department. The former shipping department now serves as a reception and translation office.

This fine increase and the developments can be attributed to our Heavenly Father, Jehovah God, who has imbued strength and courage in those sent forth to preach the Word.

Let us now turn our attention to another part of the South Pacific, the islands of Samoa.

WESTERN SAMOA

The islands of Samoa are among the most beautiful of the South Pacific. During the past two centuries, however, they have seen their share of troubles as the world powers competed for possession of them. This has left them in an economic and social condition unlike that expected in a true paradise.

Although Western Samoa is only a few miles from American Samoa and the people are related, they operate under separate governments. Since 1962 Western Samoa has been an independent nation, one of the smallest in the world.

The two large islands (Upolu and Savai'i) have an area of only 2,934 square kilometers (1,133 sq mi), but they have a population of about 160,000. They are mountainous, yet very fertile, covered with dense bush interspersed with food plantations and groves of coconut. Villages are picturesque; the houses, known as *fales*, have rounded thatched roofs and open sides because of the country's warm climate. When it rains, the people let down palm-leaf blinds. The capital town of Apia has some 35,000 inhabitants.

Predominant religions here are the Congregational Christian Church (stemming from the London Missionary Society), Methodist, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Seventh-Day Adventist and Pentecostal groups.

The Samoans are Polynesians; they are friend-

ly and hospitable. Their complexion is light brown and their features are almost Caucasian. In their village way of life, they follow a social system in which a number of families form a clan; the head of the clan is called a *matai*. There are a number of *matais* in each village. Their positions vary in importance and authority. *Matais* who are orators and chiefs are high ranking, and usually there is a paramount chief who is the final authority in the village.

As can be imagined, when all the members of a clan are of one religious belief, they can make things very difficult for one who is trying to break away from Babylon the Great.

WITNESSING IN WESTERN SAMOA

Nevertheless, visitors receive a friendly reception in almost any Samoan village. As a publisher of the good news approaches a house he pauses respectfully at the surrounding low platform of stones on which the *fale* stands and waits for a sign of welcome. There it is—a girl is spreading a mat inside. Now the publisher goes in without a word, removing his shoes before entering. When he is comfortably seated, legs crossed on the mat, he waits politely.

Now it is the householder's turn. She says how glad she is that the visitor has come to her home, that she hopes the publisher's work will be blessed, that her house is humble, but the sun is hot, and so, she concludes, the publisher is welcome. He then thanks her and inquires about the health of the family. Only then is he free to proceed with the Kingdom message.

EARLY KINGDOM WORK

It was in 1952 that the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom began to take root in Western Samoa. A brother from England, John Croxford, organized a small study group of interested people. He was employed by T.E.A.L. Airlines (now Air New Zealand) and worked in an office on Beach Road in Apia. There he met an office worker named Fuaiupolu Pele.

According to Pele, Brother Croxford was "the friendliest man I had ever met." Pele said that Brother Croxford told him later that when he saw all the people going to church on Sunday, dressed in white, with Bibles in their hands, he had no idea just where to start! But, start he did, with fine results. Pele tells us how he felt at that time:

"I knew he [Brother Croxford] wanted to talk with me, but I put him off because I had no time for it then. As chairman of the Ex-Pupils' Association of Government Schools, I was very busy. One Saturday evening, however, he came to my home for a meal, and we talked until the wee hours of Sunday morning. I asked him many questions, and every answer he gave was read from the Bible. I was convinced beyond any doubt that this was the truth I had been looking for."

Though happy to learn the truth, Pele had misgivings about the consequences. He and his family were prominent in the church, some being pastors. He was fairly well known because of his school, sports and church activities. In his mind was the question, What would the Ex-Pupils' Association think about this new religion he had embraced? What might

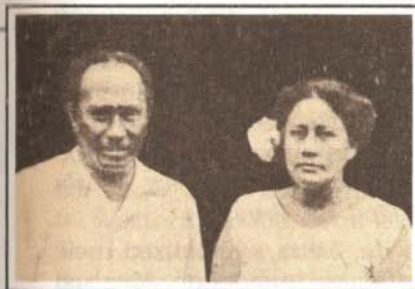
the patrons of the Association, their Highnesses Malietoa Tanumafili II and Tupua Tamasese III, think and say about him?

In Samoan custom, *matais* with high titles exert much influence. It is almost unthinkable for a Samoan, especially one without a title or high standing, to oppose the customs and religion of his forefathers. This was Pele's position when he accepted the truth.

PELE MEETS WITH THE HIGH-RANKING ONES

Pele tells us what happened: "I prayed as I never had before, asking Jehovah to direct me in the way that I should go. In the few months that followed I studied incessantly and until late at night. One day I received a letter from the high chief of our family, calling me to an evening meeting at Faleasiu to discuss this 'new church.' Taime Solomona, another family member interested in the truth, was there too. As soon as I got there the high chief opened the meeting. In the family assembly were six chiefs, three orators, ten pastors, two theological teachers, the high chief who was presiding and older men and women of the family. They cursed and condemned us for disgracing the name of the family and the church of our forefathers.

"Then the chairman said: 'It would be better to have a debate. You give your doctrines and beliefs; we give ours, and we will see who is right.' I felt like Jeremiah, burning up inside, eager to talk. Even though some yelled, 'Take that Bible away! Leave off that Bible!' I answered all their questions from the Bible and disproved their arguments. How



Fuaiupolu Pele
and his wife were
among the first
Samoan-born
Witnesses in
Western Samoa

thankful I was that I had studied God's Word as never before!

"It went on all night, until four in the morning. Finally, neither word nor sound was forthcoming from them. Their heads were bent down. Then the high chief said in a weak voice: 'You won, Pele.' I replied: 'Pardon me, Sir, I did not win. This night you heard the message of the Kingdom. It is my sincere hope you will heed it.' After departing, we looked for a bus to go home, tired but happy for the victory of God's truth. The seed of truth had taken root on Upolu."

THE STUDY GROUP GROWS

One afternoon in July a young man named Maatusi Leauanae overheard two men talking about the "new truth." Maatusi asked: "Where is this new truth?" One of the men worked at the hospital and he explained that there was a Bible study group that met each week, on this day, at the hospital. Maatusi was very interested in hearing about this "new truth." So he went to the hospital and looked in. Seeing a large group assembled, he became shy and turned away to leave. At the gate he met John Croxford just arriving to conduct the study. Broth-

er Croxford urged him to join the study, which he did. There he was introduced to Fuaiupolu Pele and several others, two or three doctors, a customs official, several office workers and a man from the agriculture department. Then followed an hour's study in the book *"Let God Be True."*

In 1952 Pele and his wife, Ailua, symbolized their dedication to Jehovah by water immersion. Maatusi Leauanae liked what he was learning but for some months was irregular in attendance. When he returned for regular study, the love and interest the group showed him, along with the truth he had heard, convinced him that he had found the true religion. Another young government employee, Siemu Taase, soon joined the group. He and Maatusi were baptized in 1956.

John Croxford left Western Samoa in 1953, but he had planted seeds of truth in good soil. Many already mentioned are still serving loyally in Jehovah's work. More were to come.

FIRST CONGREGATION FORMED

The Society approved the formation of the first congregation in Western Samoa in early 1953. A special pioneer couple from Australia, Ronald and Olive (Dolly) Sellars, arrived in May 1953, and they helped to get the congregation organized. The authorities would not extend their permit to reside in the country, so in January 1954 they moved to American Samoa.

Brother Pele tells us: "When Brother Croxford left, everybody thought that was the end of the 'new church.' But our attendance was more than 40. Brother Ted Jaracz stopped to see us on his way

back to Australia from the New York convention in 1953. We gathered at my house in the evening, and he gave us some talks that I translated."

Soon thereafter, Brother Pele named his newborn son after the three brothers who had come to Western Samoa, John Croxford, Ron Sellars and Ted Jaracz. His name is Uitinesesioneronitete in Samoan, or in English, Witness-John-Ron-Ted.

SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER

A number of Witnesses from Australia came to Western Samoa to serve where the need was greater. Richard and Gloria Jenkins, Bill and "Girlie" Moss, and others did much fine work. Time and again, applications for the Society's missionaries to enter the country were refused, so the brothers serving where the need was greater helped supply stability and mature oversight that the local brothers lacked at the time.

One brother, a native Western Samoan who had learned the truth in New Zealand, decided to help his brothers at "home" for a while. So in 1960 Charles Pritchard and his wife, Judy, moved back to Western Samoa with their two children. They stayed for five years and were able to give much aid, since he was Samoan himself and knew what the brothers needed and how to convey it to them in their language. Then they returned to New Zealand for 15 years. Since April 1981 Charles and Judy Pritchard have been serving in Western Samoa as missionaries, along with their son, Paul.

GILEAD GRADUATE GAINS ENTRY

In 1958 Sister Tia Aluni, a native Western Samoan who had been living in New Zealand, graduat-

ed from Gilead School and was assigned to nearby American Samoa. Since she could gain entry to Western Samoa, the Society invited her to choose between staying in missionary work in American Samoa and going to Western Samoa as a special pioneer. She chose the latter and spent three years (1961-64) on the largest island, Savai'i, working with a local special pioneer. Thus the work on Savai'i was opened up.

A missionary couple were serving there with a small congregation at Fogapoa but now visit the congregation once each month from the island of Upolu. The work has progressed slowly because of customs, traditions and religious beliefs, people being fearful of leaving old ways. The local publishers report faithfully each month.

THE GATHERING GOES ON

Fagalima Tuatagaloa, a crippled man with poor eyesight, recognized the truth. He was baptized in 1953 and right away started vacation pioneering (now called auxiliary pioneering). He learned the truth so well that he knew many scriptures from memory. One circuit overseer, working from house



Kingdom Hall in
Apia with open
sides

to house with him, noticed that he was accurately reading scriptures without glasses and asked if his eyesight was improving. Fagalima replied that he had lost his glasses and that he was only appearing to read the Bible. He was actually quoting from memory.

Fagalima went into the full-time service and served many years as a special pioneer. For a long time he stayed with Brother Pele's family. When he became seriously ill with cancer in 1977, they cared for him right down to his death in 1979.

CIRCUIT VISITS DESPITE OBSTACLES

When Len Helberg, Fiji's first circuit overseer, left in 1957 for Gilead School, Paul Evans took over the circuit. At that time it stretched from Tahiti in the east, through the Samoas, Niue, Tonga and Fiji, to New Caledonia in the west. A second circuit was created in 1958 with Don Clare as circuit overseer. In 1960 a third circuit was added. These covered the 12 countries under the Fiji branch. For 13 years Brother Evans, accompanied by his wife, served some of these countries in circuit work. When not traveling, they worked as missionaries in American Samoa.

It was not easy to get into Western Samoa, even for brief circuit visits. Brother Evans recalls: "Twice we served the congregation when passing through on boats. The first trip we had only three nights and two days with the brothers. The next time we fared better. We got passage on a small island freighter from Fiji, arriving in Western Samoa early on a Tuesday morning. Since the ship we were traveling on was chartered to make a seven-

day trip for the Western Samoan government to other islands and was not permitted to take us, we had to wait out the seven days on land in Apia. This was just right for us, and we had a spiritually profitable 'wait' serving the congregation." In 1959 Brother Evans had to make three attempts before being granted a permit to enter Western Samoa.

FACTORS IN SLOW PROGRESS

Though it is pleasant to witness to Samoans in field service, it is difficult to get results. Bible studies can be started, but conducting them regularly and achieving progress is another matter. The brothers, however, have done well considering that they were for many years without help from missionaries. Another factor in the slow progress is the limited number of publications in their language.

CLEANSING THE CONGREGATION

One thing that hindered progress in earlier years was the fact that some of the brothers did not readily accept the theocratic arrangement, perhaps because of pride. There were those who would not humble themselves, and in 1958 a sifting started. For some time a handful of rebellious ones had been trying to divide the congregation, setting up their own little organization. This climaxed several years of constant disturbance by them, and in their intense pride they left the congregation.

The refining resulted in the loss of a quarter of the publishers, some of whom were disfellowshipped. Jehovah unflinchingly proved that he backed his own organization, blessing those who placed their integrity above personal pride. The congregation went on growing and enjoyed an increase of

35 percent in 1959, as a truly warm spirit of love and cooperation prevailed. Brother Pele, along with his wife and several family members, stood loyal and is still going as strong as age and health will allow. The family is now associated with a Samoan congregation in Hawaii.

But more was involved in cleansing the congregation. A large number of brothers and sisters had to be disfellowshipped for sexual immorality. In Western Samoa such immorality is freely practiced, and a number of special pioneers and servants had to be removed for such misconduct.

WHOLEHEARTED SERVICE

Although the people of Western Samoa have an abundance of material food, they are poor financially. But the brothers there have used what they have in pressing forward in the Kingdom work, and Jehovah has blessed them accordingly. Consider, for example, the efforts put forth by Brother Fagalima Tuatagaloa to attend a convention in Fiji. He was not young, but old; not strong, but sickly; not sound of limb, but had a clubfoot; not endowed with good vision, but blind in one eye. To get to the convention he needed money, and to obtain it he had to gather coconuts. He carried about 15 of them at a time two miles to where he would husk them, cut out the meat and spread it out to dry, after which he sold the coconut meat, or copra.

For four weeks he worked alone on the far side of the island. Then he went to pay his fare, only to discover that it had gone up in price. He did not complain and was not discouraged; he did not ask for help. He went back to work and produced more

copra, earning the extra money. He did all of this to attend the convention to be held in two languages that he did not know. Upon arrival, what a reward for him to find that the Society had made provision for having most of the program also presented in his own language!

Because of such whole-souled service and Jehovah's blessing, the publishers increased from 37 in 1958 to a peak of 109 in 1971. They reached an all-time peak of 161 in March 1983. Surely there is a great increase yet ahead for Western Samoa, as indicated by the 1983 Memorial attendance of 594.

MISSIONARIES GAIN ENTRY

For years missionaries from outside Western Samoa were not permitted to reside in the country. But in 1970 there were some changes in government personnel. So the Apia Congregation wrote to the prime minister, under whose direction the Immigration Department operates, and applied for Paul and Frances Evans to enter Western Samoa as missionaries and stay for a period of three years, with the opportunity to obtain an extension when that expired. What a thrill the brothers received when the application was approved—after 19 years of trying!

Brother Evans was at that very time serving Western Samoa in the circuit work. So he stepped right out of the circuit work and, along with his wife, took up missionary service. They are still in Western Samoa, now working hard translating publications into the Samoan language.

That was not the end of the missionary story. Brother M. G. Henschel of the Governing Body



Paul Evans, accompanied by his wife, Frances, did circuit work over a vast area of the South Pacific, encouraging the brothers

visited Western Samoa in January 1977, surveying the situation. As a result, more missionaries were sent into the Samoan field.

PROPERTY PURCHASED

In November 1977 Robert Kawasaki from Hawaii served Western Samoa as zone overseer. He inquired if there was any land for sale on which the Society might build, and he was told there was some in the Sinamoga area about three kilometers (2 mi) inland from the main city of Apia. It was about an acre in size with three houses and an old cement-block building on it, and he recommended to the Governing Body that the Society purchase it. By October 1978 the purchase was completed, and the missionaries moved into temporary quarters in one of the houses. In 1979 two buildings were demolished and a large two-story house was renovated to serve as missionary quarters. In 1981 a brand-new missionary home was built on land leased from a brother at Faleasiu, 19 kilometers (12 mi) from Apia. Brothers traveled at their own expense from Australia, Hawaii, New Zealand and the United States to share with local brothers in building these missionary homes.

LITERATURE IN SAMOAN

In December 1957 Brother Earl Stewart from the Philippines branch served Samoa as zone overseer. He recommended to the Society that *The Watchtower* should be printed in Samoan. Brother Pele took the lead in the translation work, and the first issue appeared in May 1958 in mimeograph form.

Earlier, some tracts and the booklet "*This Good News of the Kingdom*" were translated into Samoan. Other booklets followed. Then the Samoan edition of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* arrived early in 1972. Many thousands of copies of the *Truth* book have been distributed over the years and are being used for Bible studies wherever Samoan people are found. The translation of *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* into Samoan is well under way, and it will be a wonderful instrument for use in the Samoan field.

For several years the Samoan *Watchtower* was printed in Brooklyn, New York, in a 16-page edition. Beginning with the January 1981 issue it was enlarged to 24 pages. Copies are sent to New Zealand, Hawaii and the west coast of the United States where congregations are found among large populations of Samoan people.

PROGRESS OVER THE YEARS

The work of Jehovah's people in Western Samoa has advanced slowly but surely under his direction. The number of publishers has grown from one in 1952 to 161 now. Ten missionaries, five regular and special pioneers, plus the congregation publishers, are now working in the field, and many people are hearing the Kingdom message. About 270 people

regularly gather at the meetings, showing the potential for new servants of Jehovah.

But, let us not leave the Samoas entirely; rather, let us cross over to American Samoa and learn of the advancement of the Kingdom work there.

AMERICAN SAMOA

Only about 80 kilometers (50 mi) separate the two Samoas. American Samoa has been a territory of the United States ever since the colonial powers divided the Samoas in the year 1899. It has a population of some 32,000 who live on six small islands. The largest, Tutuila, has almost 30,000.

The harbor on Tutuila, known as Pago Pago, is the best-known landmark of American Samoa. It lies in the crater of an extinct volcano with a depth of up to 122 meters (400 ft). It is a beautiful sight, the green-decked sides rising steeply to peaks about 550 meters (1,800 ft) above the blue-green waters. Over a 50-year period, this bay area has averaged more than five meters (16 ft) of rain each year! The humidity is high, averaging about 84 percent, though the temperature does not usually exceed 32° Celsius (90° F.).

As with Western Samoa, the people here are churchgoing and adhere to one of the various branches of Christendom. It is quite common for the village *matais* to sound a gong in the evening as the signal for all in the village to go indoors for prayers. During this period no one is allowed to walk around outside. After 10 or 15 minutes the gong is sounded again, signaling the end of prayer time.

THE TRUTH REACHES THE ISLAND OF TUTUILA

In 1938, when the Watch Tower Society's president, J. F. Rutherford, and his party were returning from Australia, they put into port at American Samoa, bringing ashore some of the Society's literature. There is no record, though, of anyone accepting the Kingdom message at that time, and many years were to pass before the work moved ahead in this South Pacific field.

In 1952 Sister Lydia Pedro came to American Samoa to visit relatives, telling them about the good news. As a result of this trip, her cousin, Uaealesi (Wallace) Pedro, learned the truth.

GETTING A SOLID FOOTING

On January 5, 1954, Australian-born Ronald and Olive (Dolly) Sellars set foot on the island; they had been granted a one-month trial visa to enter as missionaries. After noting that they had been refused permission to stay in Western Samoa, the attorney-general said: "We have religious freedom in American Samoa, and I am going to see you get the benefit of this freedom just the same as any other religion."

Finally, the attorney-general's office sent a letter stating that there was no objection to the Watch Tower Society's establishing an organization in American Samoa. Brother and Sister Sellars were given visas for an indefinite stay. Later, other missionaries were given permission to enter the islands. Over the years, in all the territory under the Fiji branch, this has been the only country that freely granted entry to new missionaries.

A YOUNG MAN TAKES HIS STAND FOR THE TRUTH

The arrival of the missionaries was what stimulated Wallace Pedro to progress in the truth. He tells us his experience: "At the time the missionaries arrived, I could see the need to associate with Jehovah's people. There were only seven of us who attended the meetings held at the missionary home. On April 30, 1955, I became the first person to be baptized in American Samoa. My family was not very pleased with this, especially when I became very active in the preaching work.

"One day when I returned from the Congregation Book Study, I found my family in conference. The choice was put before me: Stop associating with Jehovah's Witnesses or get out of the home! Even though I had one more year of high school left and had no means of financial support, my decision was firm for the truth. My family then disowned me and put me out with nothing but the clothes I was wearing! Jehovah lovingly provided a place for me to stay—the missionary home; and brothers in the United States sent me clothing."

Wallace stayed with the missionaries for some time and finished his schooling; he then became a pioneer and later a special pioneer. He served up until about 1960 before immigrating to the United States. In 1979 Brother Pedro and his wife and four children went back to American Samoa. And what about his family who disowned him? One of his brothers, his sister and one of his nieces are Witnesses. Then, in 1980, at the age of 72, his mother was baptized! Even his father was studying the Bible before his death. This young man's stand

for Jehovah and the truth certainly brought him and his family blessings.

FIRST CIRCUIT OVERSEER VISIT

In 1955 fine help was given to the small group when Brother Len Helberg arrived as the first circuit overseer in American Samoa. During his visit the Society's film *The New World Society in Action* was shown throughout the island; a total of 3,227 people were at these showings. This was a marvelous witness, for it helped people discern that Jehovah's Witnesses are doing a worldwide work.

Two months after these film showings, a congregation was officially started with three publishers and the six missionaries.

Though many more people in American Samoa understand English than is the case in Western Samoa, the basic language is still Samoan. Thus the new congregation was greatly aided when it received a shipment of 16,000 copies of the booklet "*This Good News of the Kingdom*" in Samoan.

MORE PIONEERS AND MISSIONARIES ARRIVE

Many publishers, pioneers and missionaries have served in the islands and have given faithful, loving assistance to build up the brothers. At one time the small island of Tutuila had nine missionaries and three regular pioneers. This brought results—118 were at the Memorial in 1960.

FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE AT DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

In 1960 the brothers had the thrill of being hosts to some of the Witnesses from Fiji, as well as to

their brothers from Western Samoa. This was at the Peace-pursuing District Assembly. In 1966 another district convention drew almost 300 delegates from eight countries under the branch as well as from Australia and New Zealand. At that time there were only 26 publishers in all of American Samoa, so what a witness it was to see such a crowd!

The brothers in American Samoa have attended some district conventions in Fiji and some in Western Samoa. Though there is usually some travel involved, it is fine to see that the conventions have been held consistently for over 20 years, and the brothers have always been in attendance to receive the spiritual food with appreciation.

POOR HEALTH NO BARRIER

In 1962 Tafia Pula, then 66 years old, accepted the truth. Though he was almost housebound because of filariasis, a disease that affected both his arms and his legs, he still spent many hours in Jehovah's service. Because his limbs were so swollen and heavy, he could hardly walk, even with the aid of a cane, but still his zeal for Jehovah moved him to do more preaching than some who were younger.

He wanted to be baptized, but his family feared that his going into the sea and being submerged might kill him. So he replied to them: "If I die being baptized, then I'm happy because I will die doing God's will." He was baptized and did not die!

In 1972, the last year of his life, he was out in the service with one of the brothers and said to him: "You go on because I'm holding you back. I think it is best for me to return to the pickup and witness to whoever comes along the road." As the

brother looked back, there was Brother Tafia Pula talking to passersby. He had a message to give, and he gave it, right up to the end. When he was in the hospital for the last two days of his life, he called his daughter to bring his witnessing bag so he could keep it at his bedside for ready use.

FACTORS AFFECTING PROGRESS

During the 1960's the work moved ahead slowly, with the average number of publishers increasing from 22 in 1961 to 44 in 1970. Many times there were setbacks as some, including even special pioneers, would fall prey to immorality and have to be removed from the congregation. This is an ongoing problem in the islands, as in many other parts of the world.

Another reason that growth has seemed slow is the easy access that Samoans have to the United States. Often, just as new ones get into the preaching work, they move to the United States. Many such ones have associated with the Samoan congregations in Hawaii and on the west coast of the United States and are serving Jehovah there.

THE GOOD NEWS HAS BEEN PREACHED

With a congregation firmly established on the main island of American Samoa, the Kingdom work has reached the ears of almost all the people of this territory. Whereas the ratio of publishers of the good news to population in Western Samoa is still one to about 1,000, this is not so in smaller American Samoa, where it is one to about 400.

Missionaries serving in American Samoa in 1961

The group of three islands known as the Manua Islands, the islands of Tau, Ofu and Olosega, have also heard the message. For example, in 1980 the circuit overseer, John Rhodes, his wife, Helen, and five other publishers spent five days witnessing in this small group of islands. They worked their way through all the villages and placed 159 books, 126 booklets, 268 magazines and obtained 66 subscriptions. Now twice a year the congregation on Tutuila makes calls on these distant islands.

With a peak of 81 publishers for the last service year and with meeting attendance averaging 167 at the public talks, prospects of further growth are good. All thanks go to Jehovah God for his blessing on the activity of establishing the true Christian congregation in these beautiful islands of the South Pacific.



From the eastern extremity of the branch territory, let us move north toward the equator to the island groups of Kiribati and Tuvalu (formerly Gilbert and Ellice Islands) and learn of the development of the Kingdom work there.

KIRIBATI AND TUVALU

These two groups of islands were originally under one colonial administration, with headquarters at Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands since the end of World War II. Because the islanders originate from two different races and have two different languages, the groups were separated during 1975 and 1976. They subsequently received their independence from Great Britain, and the Gilbert Islands became the Republic of Kiribati and the Ellice Islands the nation of Tuvalu.

Kiribati, the larger of the two island countries, consists of 33 islands scattered over about five million square kilometers (2 million sq mi). This includes the 16 Gilbert Islands, the 8 Phoenix Islands, 8 of the Line Islands and Ocean Island. When added to the 9 islands of Tuvalu, the land area totals only about 745 square kilometers (288 sq mi). Most of the islands of Tuvalu are ring-shaped coral reefs that surround lagoons.

The islands are usually very small and barely protrude out of the sea; in fact, within Tuvalu nowhere does the land rise to more than 4.6 meters (15 ft) above sea level. Due to the poor quality of the soil, very few varieties of food grow except for coconut, pandanus and breadfruit trees, along with staple root crops known as *pulaka* and taro.

Among the most densely populated in the Pacific, these islands have a total of over 60,000 people. Tuvalu has a population of 8,000 people with about 2,300 living on the island of Funafuti, the capital of the country. Most of the Tuvaluans are Polynesians who speak the Tuvaluan language, with many also knowing English. The majority of the islanders of Kiribati are Micronesians who speak Gilbertese, although many of them also speak English.

RELIGION AND CUSTOMS

By the mid-1850's some Protestant missions were established and later a Catholic mission. At first the people were not very receptive, but the missionaries began to win them over by making gifts of cloth and tobacco.

Eventually the churches managed to get a hold over the people and to obtain land. The book *Kiribati, Aspects of History* reports: "Some people who wanted tobacco gave the missionaries land in exchange for a few sticks. This is how the Catholic mission in Nonouti got land on which to build its station." The LMS (London Missionary Society) and the Catholic mission controlled different parts of Kiribati, but Tuvalu came solely under the control of the LMS group.

The missions' control over the islanders can be seen by what happened in Tuvalu. The Samoan pastors arrived and started to impose the Samoan language and customs on the people. So by the mid-1940's the churches had a strong hold on most aspects of island life. Every village of thatched huts was built around an impressive church building. Some pastors attained so much power that they

could forbid the consumption of alcohol and outlaw bicycle riding on Sundays.

KINGDOM WORK STARTS IN KIRIBATI AND TUVALU

Little did Bill Checksfield, witnessing in Suva, Fiji, realize the implications of his making a return visit on a Tuvaluan man named Foua Tofinga. After studying the Bible for four years, Tofinga was baptized in 1951—the first Tuvaluan to come into the truth. His wife, Selepa, was baptized in 1957. Eventually Tofinga became an elder in the Suva Congregation and is presently a member of the Fiji Branch Committee.

Although Tofinga was not able to return to Tuvalu, it was from his home in Suva that the truth started to spread to Kiribati and Tuvalu. Both Tofinga's father and father-in-law were pastors in the LMS Church, so when Tofinga and his wife accepted the truth, it caused quite a stir in the Tuvaluan community.

According to island custom nearly every Tuvaluan that has come to Fiji has also visited the family of Brother Tofinga. Naturally, this has led to many opportunities for them to witness to Tuvaluans. Thus, more and more the Kingdom message started to filter back into Kiribati and Tuvalu.

To illustrate how this happened, consider the experience of a Tuvaluan, Saulo Teasi. While working on a ship, Saulo came to Fiji in the late 1940's and found that he had a week to spare in Suva. He visited Sister Tofinga's mother, who by now had started to show an interest in the truth. When Brother Checksfield also visited this home, Saulo

sat quietly in the background during a Bible discussion. He was impressed with the fact that Brother Checksfield always used the Bible to answer any questions. When Saulo heard that this missionary was going to return in a few days, he made it a point to be there. Saulo left the second discussion with a copy of the book *"Let God Be True"* and was sure that he had found the true religion.

Meanwhile, others, including Sister Tofinga's sister, Lise, showed interest in the truth. By this time these interested persons had moved to Tarawa, in Kiribati, and soon a little study group with about ten people was started in Tarawa. Although none of them were baptized, they carried on in spite of constant opposition. Thus they proved to be the basis for the start of the work in Kiribati and Tuvalu.

In the mid-1950's, after completing a work contract, Saulo arrived in Tarawa, and while awaiting transportation to Tuvalu he stayed at Lise's home. He and his family had many opportunities to talk to Lise about Bible-related subjects, and he soon decided to stay in Tarawa and work there. Saulo was delighted to find that what he was learning was the same as what he had heard in Fiji from Brother Checksfield. Soon Saulo and his wife, Uto, were meeting with the little group.

THE KIRIBATI GROUP RECEIVES HELP

This group received great help in 1961 when a family of four from New Zealand arrived. Brother Huia Paxton was employed as a chemist by the Kiribati government. For three years he and his family greatly encouraged the local brothers.

They even studied Gilbertese and learned to speak it fluently. Not only did they correspond with interested people, including some on Ocean Island, but they also bought a small yacht to visit others on nearby islands. By 1965, when circuit overseer Fred Wegener visited them, four families of interested persons, 15 adults and their children, were associating with them.

When his work contract expired in 1967, Brother Paxton and his family returned to New Zealand. On the way back their ship made a call at Ocean Island where they were able to meet some of the ones with whom they had corresponded and to encourage them. Six months later when the circuit overseer visited Tarawa he found the group had increased in number and was meeting together regularly, using the English-language book "*Make Sure of All Things.*" At that time there were no publications in the Gilbertese language.

Although these brothers do not have the help of any missionaries or pioneers, a small congregation of Jehovah's people continues to spread the good news from the capital, Tarawa. Since September 1, 1980, Kiribati has been under the new branch in Guam, which is supervising the work in all Micronesia.

PROGRESS IN TUVALU

When Saulo Teasi returned to Funafuti, the capital of Tuvalu, in the early 1960's, he was surprised to find that there was a small group of people that were meeting together to study *The Watchtower*. This group was being cared for by a former doctor, Uili Opetaia (Willy O'Brien). Uili, who had heard

the truth in Suva while at medical college, had been baptized in Samoa and was now spreading what he had learned. Soon this group was joined by Apelu Teagai and his wife, Lumepa. Like Saulo, Apelu had learned the truth while in Suva.

At this time Saulo's wife, Uto, began to oppose him strongly even though at first she had manifested an interest. Every Sunday there seemed to be an argument when Saulo would not join her in going to the church service. However, an unexpected blessing was about to occur.

This came in May 1962 when Sisters Lydia Pedro and Alisi Dranidalo, both special pioneers from Fiji, were assigned to Tuvalu. Sister Pedro was born in Tuvalu and Sister Dranidalo was a native Fijian. The local government was opposed to these two sisters staying, so in January 1963 they had to leave Tuvalu. During their stay the sisters conducted a number of Bible studies even though they were not allowed to preach from house to house. Especially did the two special pioneers help Uto, Saulo's wife, to take her stand for the truth. As a result of their work, when the circuit overseer came to Tuvalu in 1964 he found that Saulo and Apelu were ready for baptism. Then the following year Uto was baptized, along with Uili's wife, Melapa.

CIRCUIT OVERSEERS VISIT TUVALU

From the mid-1960's to the late 1970's this little congregation continued on despite much opposition. In time it became easier to get circuit overseers into the country. This provision from Jehovah was something that the brothers greatly appreciated.

It has not been easy for these traveling overseers

to settle into the island way of life. One of the brothers that was visiting Funafuti was recovering from a bout of dengue fever when he decided to go swimming in the beautiful lagoon. After a while he noticed a foreign object floating past and then thought to himself, 'No, it couldn't be!' Then later when he saw more of these, he noticed the toilets on stilts over the water! Needless to say, that was the last swim he had in the lagoon!

Another brother and sister, while staying in Kiribati, were sleeping on a gravel floor under a mosquito net when a strange noise startled them. The brother turned on his flashlight and found that they were being invaded by crabs trying to get through the mosquito net! Later, when they arrived in Tuvalu, they found that most of the homes had been destroyed by hurricane Bebe. So they stayed with a brother and his family in a small shack. Here they were kept awake at night by rats playing on top of the temporary ceiling.

These brothers have learned to adjust to many different circumstances. For instance, during a time of water shortage in Kiribati, there came a sudden downpour and one of the circuit overseers was seen taking a shower in his bathing suit under a leaking gutter. He was making good use of that shower of rain!

So, though it was not always easy for the brothers who came to serve the congregations in these islands, their efforts were certainly blessed.

MAINTAINING INTEGRITY AND PURITY

The test of whether or not the truth is really established in any country is that the brothers re-

main steadfast in the truth despite the strongest opposition. Consider the example of Sister Lumepa, who died in March 1970. She had been suffering from internal bleeding for two years and needed an operation but was told that it could not be performed without a blood transfusion. For two years doctors, the hospital staff, friends and close relatives tried to persuade her to take blood transfusions, but she remained steadfast to Jehovah's laws and died a faithful Witness. Even on an isolated island Jehovah's spirit is there to strengthen those who put faith in him.

As has already been mentioned, Christendom's missions helped to popularize smoking in these islands, so that nearly all the islanders have become enslaved to the tobacco habit. There have been some fine examples of those who, upon learning Jehovah's requirements, have immediately given up the habit.—2 Cor. 7:1.

BROTHERS FROM OVERSEAS ARRIVE

October 1978 was a turning point in the activities of Jehovah's people in Tuvalu. Two important



Saulo Teasi
(shown here with
his wife and son)
helped start the
Kingdom work
in Kiribati and
Tuvalu

things happened. First, an Australian brother, Lon Bowman, who had been serving in Papua New Guinea, obtained secular work in Tuvalu. Second, the Tuvaluan government granted permission for two Australian missionaries to live in Tuvalu for two years, and they are still serving there.

Brother Bowman helped the brothers to get into a better routine with their meetings and Bible study work. When the missionaries, Geoffrey and Jeanette Jackson, arrived a couple of months later, they found that the small congregation was operating in an orderly manner.

Within a short time this small band of brothers and sisters were conducting over 40 Bible studies. By the time Brother Bowman and his family left, there were 12 publishers of the good news. In 1982 the publishers reached a peak of 22.

ATTENDING ASSEMBLIES

Due to their isolation and the high cost of travel, very few of the Tuvaluan brothers have been able to attend a convention of Jehovah's people. During 1979, however, the brothers and sisters put forth special effort to attend the district convention in Fiji. They worked at everything from making and selling chocolate to carting sand, and with some help from their spiritual brothers overseas, they were pleased to have a delegation of eight brothers and sisters attend the convention. Among these was Sister Uto Teasi who, although she was baptized in 1965, had never been to a convention. Even though she could not speak English or Fijian (the languages in which the program was presented), she was thrilled to be with over 1,300 gathered at

that convention. Another of her joys was to meet again with Sister Alisi Dranidalo who had helped her learn the truth back in 1962.

REACHING OTHER ISLANDS

During the past few years, not only has the capital, Funafuti, received a thorough witness but the missionaries, along with others in the congregation, have regularly visited the outer islands in the Tuvalu group. Many interested ones on the outer islands now have Bible studies through correspondence.

There are times when the Funafuti Congregation puts on a 15-minute radio program that can be heard in all the Tuvaluan islands. As the missionaries visit the outer islands, they hear many express appreciation for the Bible truths that they are learning from the radio broadcasts.

The clergy, however, put pressure on the government to stop the programs. At the invitation of the radio station manager, Brother Jackson attended a meeting where he heard one of the pastors angrily exclaim: "The people are asking too many questions after listening to these programs. We can't have that!" The pastors requested that a church committee review all programs before they are broadcast. But later, a new manager and a new program organizer were appointed, and they were not afraid of the clergy. So the good news still reaches the outer islands by means of the radio programs.

PROGRESS WITH TUVALUAN LITERATURE

Over the years the brothers in Funafuti have been using the Samoan-language literature in their meetings. Some of the older ones understand Sa-

moan, but for most in the congregation this has been difficult. So a concerted effort was put forth to translate some of the publications for local use, and the Governing Body has approved the printing of this literature in the Tuvaluan language.

So, the Witnesses on these islands are continuing to declare the good news, and as they do so they look forward to further increase, especially in view of their 1983 Memorial, with 155 attending, 68 of whom attended on the island of Funafuti. This was about one out of every 34 persons on the entire island of Funafuti, the capital.

Now let us turn our attention to the only kingdom remaining in the South Pacific islands of Polynesia—Tonga.

TONGA

The Kingdom of Tonga is a country made up of about 200 small islands, only a few of which are inhabited. There are three main island groups: Tongatapu, Haapai (low-lying groups of coral reefs) and Vavau, which is mountainous. The land area is 670 square kilometers (260 sq mi). Nukualofa is the capital and is situated on the largest island, Tongatapu, which is located about 700 kilometers (430 mi) southeast of Suva, Fiji.

British explorer Captain James Cook visited the islands in 1773 and called them the Friendly Islands. And, indeed, the people, most of whom are Polynesians, are friendly. Their language is Tongan, but today most schoolchildren also learn English. More than 90,000 people live on these islands and most of them are very religious.

Tonga was a protectorate of Great Britain until it became fully independent in 1970. Its government is a constitutional monarchy, and the king rules with the advice of a cabinet, a parliament and a privy council.

RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH

It was through one of the early pioneers sent out by the Australian branch that the truth first came to Tonga. The pioneer working in Fiji distributed booklets to all whom he met. A Tongan who was a skipper of a sailing clipper accepted the booklet *Where Are the Dead?* On his return to Tonga he gave the booklet to a friend by the name of Charles Vete, a worker with the telecommunications department. This was in 1932. Charles read the booklet and was convinced that he had found the truth. Until that time he was a member of the Methodist Church, but from then on, though not having any association with Jehovah's Witnesses, he withdrew from the church and declared the message of the Bible.

Charles wrote to the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, asking for more information. Back came sets of books. Moreover, the Society's president at that time, J. F. Rutherford, asked Charles if he would translate the booklet *Where Are the Dead?* into Tongan. He accepted the assignment, and in due course a shipment of 1,000 booklets arrived. Charles was moved to send a contribution for them and then began to distribute them. Many civil servants with whom he worked heard the truth in this way. Thus in 1933 the first witnessing work began in the Kingdom of Tonga.

For about 25 years Charles Vete was on his own in declaring the good news in Tonga. His work took him north from the main island of Tongatapu with the capital of Nukualofa, to the islands of Vavau and Niuaotuputu. He distributed many booklets in these islands. Though a number of people showed interest, not much progress was made, as there was no congregation with which to associate. But the booklet *Where Are the Dead?* received wide distribution. Even today as a publisher goes from house to house, he meets people who remember this booklet and its distribution by Charles Vete. Through his preaching over the years, he became known as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, though he did not get baptized until 1964.

Beginning in March 1955 circuit overseers made brief visits to these islands, but because of the strong influence of the Methodist and Roman Catholic religions, no Witness missionaries were allowed to enter the country, and no brothers from other places could get into the country to help the local publishers. So the Witnesses in Tonga have had to develop largely on their own.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE

By taking the initiative, the brothers have progressed. Here is an example of their zeal: In 1964 the script of a special public talk was sent to them. Though the brother caring for the group had never given a talk, he prepared and delivered it; Jehovah blessed his earnest effort with an attendance of 22 persons.

Another indication of the brothers' desire to progress in the truth has been their efforts to provide



The first Kingdom Hall built at Nukualofa, Tonga, with a group of Tongan brothers

translations of *Watchtower* study articles. Brother Charles Vete translated them into the Tongan language; copies were made by hand and then used by the group as their study material. The same thing was done with the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*.

In 1965 when circuit overseer Fred Wegener and district overseer Donald Clare visited Nukualofa, they were impressed by the diligent efforts put forth to keep the organization going without outside assistance. A year later the brothers there were thrilled when they could write to the Society and say that they had just built a Kingdom Hall on land offered by Brother Osaiasi Tovi within his allotment; it is large enough to accommodate up to 30 people.

HELP FROM THE OUTSIDE

Over the years some government officials have been replaced by men with a more favorable attitude toward the Witnesses. Thus after almost 14 years the Tongan immigration officials announced in 1969 that the Society's traveling representatives would be allowed to stay for six months. So the Society

sent in circuit overseer Len Helberg and his wife, Rita, for two months, and what a joyful time of training that was!

Several days a week the brothers gathered at Brother Vete's home to learn congregation organization. The visit was climaxed with the Memorial, attended by 53, and a circuit assembly, which helped to develop a stronger spirit of love and unity. The brothers cooked the day's food on hot stones buried in a ground oven and ate under a large tarpaulin hung from trees behind the Kingdom Hall. Spread on mats on the ground were low feasting tables lent to Brother Tovi by the king of Tonga, for whom Brother Tovi works as chauffeur. That month Tonga reached a new peak of 18 publishers.

CONGREGATION FORMED

With a peak of 20 publishers reporting in 1970, the Nukualofa Congregation was formed. Since then each circuit overseer has given the brothers training in theocratic procedures as well as working with them in the field. There has been growth, with the number of publishers reaching a peak of 41 in April 1983.

At present, missionaries are still not allowed to enter Tonga. Though recognizing that Jehovah's Witnesses are not a new religion in the islands, some government officials are not keen to encourage the growth of the truth.

KINGDOM MESSAGE REACHING THE PEOPLE

Since the majority of the Tongan people live on the main island of Tongatapu, where the Nukualofa Congregation is located, the Kingdom message is

reaching many. The first local sister to take up the special pioneer work started this service in 1978, and now there are four special pioneers. Even in Haapai to the north, a small group is declaring the good news. The brothers and sisters there make a real effort to come down to Nukualofa for the circuit overseer's visit, and this is combined with a one-congregation circuit assembly.

During the 1970's a few brothers came to Tonga to serve where the need is greater. David Wolfram and his family from New Zealand spent a few years here working with the congregation. Since he is a Tongan citizen, he could gain entry into the country. The need is surely great in the Tonga Islands, for the ratio of Witnesses to population is one to 2,198.

If it be Jehovah's will, however, more will be done there before the "great tribulation" brings an end to Jehovah's "day of salvation." (Matt. 24:21, 29; 2 Cor. 6:1, 2) New ones are listening to the Kingdom message. The prospects for increase are good with 164 in attendance at the 1983 Memorial. Brother and Sister David Wolfram returned in May 1983, to settle on Vavau to open up the work there. Two special pioneers have been assigned to work with them. It is the fervent hope of Jehovah's Witnesses in this country that renewed efforts to have missionaries enter Tonga may succeed. Whether or not this happens, the faithful band of brothers and sisters will continue to make Jehovah's Word known to the friendly people of the Kingdom of Tonga.

About 480 kilometers (300 mi) northeast of Tonga is a most unusual island by the name of Niue.

NIUE

This country is just one small island, about 19 kilometers (12 mi) long and about 16 kilometers (10 mi) wide, making a total area of only 259 square kilometers (100 sq mi). In all the South Pacific, Niue is considered unique. It is limestone in composition, and wherever one goes on the island one can see evidence in the limestone rocks of shells and coral that once were under the ocean. Unlike other islands, it has no beaches. High cliffs rise abruptly out of the ocean; then the land surface is an almost flat plateau. Honeycombed with caves, Niue is an amateur explorer's paradise.

While Niue was granted self-government by New Zealand in 1974, the people remain protected as New Zealand citizens. The Constitution provides for free association with New Zealand and a Legislative Assembly of 20 members, 14 elected from village constituencies and 6 from a common roll. Direction and control of the island is in the hands of a four-member Cabinet. Local government takes the form of village councils of which there are 14, councillors being elected for a three-year term. Elders of each community have a voice in matters affecting each village.

Niueans are a mixture of Samoans, Tongans and Cook Islanders who migrated there hundreds of years ago; they have blended into one ethnic group. Their language is a mixture of Samoan and Tongan. Unlike most other Pacific islanders, Niueans have no hereditary chiefs, and the head of each family gives directions.

About 9,000 Niueans have moved to New Zealand

in recent years, so there are many empty houses in the villages. The predominant religious group is the Ekalesia Niue, which developed from the London Missionary Society.

THE TRUTH REACHES NIUE

Theocratic history began in Niue in February 1960 when Sisters Tia Aluni and Ivy Kawhe, missionaries serving in American Samoa, were requested to spend a month in Niue. At that time an interisland ship made only a monthly call, so if a person disembarked he had to wait a month for the next ship. Since Witness missionaries were not allowed into Niue, the sisters asked to enter the country to visit relatives. Sister Aluni had an aunt on the island, and they stayed with her.

The sisters placed more literature in one month than they did for a whole year in their own territory! A great deal of interest, as well as opposition, was stirred up. One of the persons to whom they witnessed was Samuel Makatongia. He was a member of the LMS Church, but he showed a deep interest in the truth; for some years he had been subscribing for *The Watchtower*. Although the sisters had to cycle about 20 kilometers (12 mi) to find him, they were well rewarded. What a blessing it turned out to be for the work in Niue, for this brother has been the mainstay of the work there and is the presiding overseer of the local congregation!

A FIJIAN PIONEER HELPS OUT

Not long after the sisters left the island, the branch office arranged for Seremaia Raibe, a native Fijian pioneer, to go there on a work contract with

the Public Works Department. He used evenings and weekends to help the local brothers.

After Brother Raibe had been there for a few months, the resident commissioner, under pressure from the religious leaders, summoned him to appear for an interview. Brother Raibe, a big, husky Fijian, was asked by the commissioner why he had come to the island as a "worker," when actually he had come to preach. Brother Raibe replied that everyone on the island seemed to know that he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and if the commissioner had asked him the day he arrived, he would have acknowledged that he was a Witness. Then the commissioner told the Witness that for the sake of peace on the island, it would be best if he did not go from house to house, even though the Constitution guarantees freedom of worship. Not long after this, Brother Raibe's permit to stay on the island was revoked and he returned to Fiji. In September 1961 the Legislative Assembly of Niue adopted the policy of not allowing any Witnesses into the country.

While he was still on the island, however, Brother Raibe organized regular meetings. The Devil, using his old trick of intimidation, stirred up the local villagers to stone the house where the meetings were held; but these tactics failed when the principal stone throwers became interested in the truth and started attending the meetings themselves!

MORE HELP ARRIVES

Meantime, a married Niuean brother, William Lovini, was living in New Zealand, where he learned the truth. In 1961 Brother Lovini went back to

Niue to serve where the need was greater. He was employed by the government of Niue, and for a number of years he took the lead in the congregation. The number of publishers rose to 34.

Circuit overseer Paul Evans spent part of a day on Niue when the monthly interisland ship made a call. He spoke to the brothers, discussed their problems, analyzed their activity and made suggestions—all in the space of about six hours before the ship left. Then in 1966 Brother Evans and his wife, Frances, were allowed to enter Niue for six weeks—provided they did not engage in house-to-house work. It was a fine time for building up the brothers.

CARRYING ON DESPITE EMIGRATION OF BROTHERS

From 1965 onward the number of publishers declined, dropping to a low of nine publishers. Why was this? Most of the brothers, including Brother Lovini, left for New Zealand for various reasons.

Those left behind had little experience in congregational matters and had only a limited knowledge of English. They still continued to meet, however, and regularly reported their field service to the branch office. Then in February 1967 they received a one-month visit from circuit overseer Len Heatley. A condensed Kingdom Ministry School was conducted, and on the last weekend of the visit they held a small assembly.

In 1968 the brothers were again blessed with a one-month circuit visit, and thereafter they have had regular yearly visits. Each has concluded with a mini circuit assembly, encouraging the brothers

to press on with the Kingdom work. When the circuit overseer visited in 1970, the brothers were thrilled to have 92 attend the public talk and to see 111 attend the Memorial.

Since then the situation has remained virtually unchanged. With about 3,200 Niueans left on the island, the local brothers are giving the witness, and the ratio is one publisher to 359.

Far more well known than Niue is Tahiti. Let us see how the Kingdom work began in this largest island of French Polynesia.

TAHITI

Tahiti is the best-known island in the group known as the Society Islands in French Polynesia, about 3,540 kilometers (2,200 mi) east of Fiji. Shaped like the figure eight, Tahiti is mountainous, with peaks rising to 2,237 meters (7,339 ft). The island, well watered by rain and streams, has spectacular scenery. Its only large town is Papeete, and it has an interesting, mixed population, speaking Tahitian, French, Chinese and, increasingly, English. Religiously, the people adhere mainly to the Roman Catholic and French Protestant churches.

THE TRUTH COMES TO TAHITI

Two traveling overseers started the preaching work in Tahiti. The first, Len Helberg, spent two months there in 1956-57. He called on people who had written for subscriptions for the Society's mag-

The spiritual paradise is expanding in Tahiti and neighboring islands

azines. He also showed the film *The New World Society in Action* five times, with the attendance totaling 618. The second was Paul Evans. In 1957 he placed over 70 books and Bibles. But it was not until the following year that a basis for a congregation was laid.

Agnes Schenck, a citizen of Tahiti, was living with her husband and son in the United States when the family came into the truth. In 1957, while at a convention, they heard Brother Knorr announce that Tahiti, a country where the Kingdom work was banned and missionaries were denied entry, was one of the lands where the need was greater. Earl and Agnes Schenck with their 11-year-old son decided to go there. They sailed from California in May 1958.

One of the brothers who had encouraged this family to go to Tahiti was Clyde Neill, and after the



1958 Divine Will International Assembly in New York, he and his family, as well as David Carano and his family, entered Tahiti that same year on three-month tourist visas. To avoid attracting the attention of the authorities, the brothers changed the location of the *Watchtower* Study each week. The hospitable Tahitians served refreshments afterward, which added to the impression that the brothers were tourists.

Soon several Bible studies were started even though the language barrier was a problem. The brothers coped with this by using two books, one in French and one in English. On many occasions Sister Schenck helped the others out with French and Tahitian.

Many times, as one of the Witnesses was walking along with an interested Tahitian, friends or relatives would stop them and inquire about this new religion. Once, a friend of a Tahitian spied him with a Witness, so he stopped his bus in the middle of the street and let his passengers sit there while he got out and talked with the two of them. Arrangements were made right then and there for a home Bible study!

NEW ONES BAPTIZED

The climax of these brothers' stay in Tahiti came just before they had to leave the island after three spiritually uplifting months. This was the baptism of eight persons, the firstfruits of Tahiti! Then the Neills and Caranos had to return to the United States, leaving the Schencks and the new ones to carry on the Kingdom work.

In 1959 a congregation was formed in Papeete,

and although missionaries were banned, Don Clare entered Tahiti as the district overseer and held a circuit assembly during each visit. By 1960 there were 28 publishers.

The year 1960 was a memorable one for the reason that the government granted recognition to a locally organized association of Jehovah's Witnesses. This gave the work legal standing and allowed for the association to buy property.

A TIME OF TESTING

As 1 John 2:19 indicates, there are those who "were not of our sort." Tahiti did not prove to be any exception to this, as was proved by events in 1961. A French pioneer, Claude Bonhomme, was assigned by the Society to serve in Tahiti. Because of his maturity and experience, he was assigned as overseer to replace the local brother who had been serving up to that time. The local man became jealous, and as a result, dissension arose in the congregation. Some were disfellowshipped, others stopped associating. Although this had a dampening effect, the work never stopped, and by 1963 the number of publishers had climbed to 68.

FURTHER EXPANSION

The highlight of 1963 was the completion of an island-style Kingdom Hall, and the Witnesses had the joy of seeing 198 seated in it for the Memorial. The following year the 78 publishers held their circuit assembly in it with 220 in attendance.

Big changes had to be made in the lives of these lovable island folk for them to conform to the Bible's requirements for Christians. Consider, for example, a 42-year-old woman who had given birth

to 14 children out of wedlock before finding the truth. She was living with a man to whom she was not married. She decided to straighten out her life even though difficulties arose because her children did not all have the same surname. The matter had to be taken to court, and this process consumed a year's time.

When it was finally settled, she married the man. One month later she and one of her daughters were baptized. Now her other children and grandchildren are also proclaiming the good news.

The only congregation in all French Polynesia at the time was in Papeete, and it was growing rapidly. The Society sent two special pioneers to help the congregation. They were Brother and Sister Inaudi, who had been special pioneers in France. It was not long before Brother Inaudi became a traveling overseer, visiting French Polynesia, New Caledonia and New Hebrides (now Vanuatu).

Tahitians are noted for the giving of leis to visitors—floral leis on arrival, and nonperishable shell leis for a permanent remembrance on departure. This custom has led to opportunities to witness. For example, Brother Don Clare relates: "During my visits to Tahiti up to a hundred brothers and interested persons welcomed us on arrival and farewelled us on departure. On each occasion we received a hundred flower or shell leis. Seeing us boarding planes with seashell leis piled so high we could hardly see where we were going, tourists on the same flight, with only one lei, would inquire if I was the governor of the island. This led to many fine discussions."

IMPACT OF FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The "Peace on Earth" International Assembly in November 1969 marked a turning point. At the time there were only 124 local publishers, and what a joy it was for them to meet with 210 delegates from 16 different countries! The attendance of 488 at the public talk thrilled the brothers. This was also the first time that the local newspaper made mention of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Brother F. W. Franz' presence at the convention proved to be most stimulating, and his remarks motivated the brothers to carry on the Kingdom work that lay ahead in the 62 inhabited islands in French Polynesia. Brother Franz was the first member of the Governing Body to visit Tahiti, and the benefit of this visit and the convention is seen in the 15-percent increase in publishers for 1970. In 1971 a new congregation was formed.

MORE HELP ARRIVES

In 1971 Brother Sicari in France wrote the Fiji branch office regarding serving where the need was greater. The office encouraged him to move to Tahiti. It took some months to prepare for the trip, and the family sold their furniture and auto to pay for the tickets. Thus in May 1972 Brother and Sister Sicari arrived in Tahiti with their two daughters, nine-year-old Elizabeth and six-year-old Helene. Brother Sicari, who now serves on the Branch Committee, has been happy to do his part in helping the local brothers to progress. Sister Sicari went back into the regular pioneer service, though having two children. This incited the local sisters to follow her example. She is still in the

pioneer work, and her older daughter, Elizabeth, has joined her as a regular pioneer.

NEW KINGDOM HALLS AND FURTHER PROGRESS

The Papeete Kingdom Hall, built in the Tahitian style with its coconut-leaf roof, needed rebuilding and, above all, to have closed-in sidewalls to prevent the neighborhood chickens from spending the night there. So, in February 1973 the new Papeete Kingdom Hall was dedicated. In September of that year the Punaauia Congregation dedicated their Kingdom Hall. With a view to future growth, this hall was built to accommodate 500, and circuit assemblies could be held there too.

In 1973 two Tahitian families who had learned the truth in France decided to return to Tahiti. Brother Colson Dean's family settled in Tahiti, while Brother and Sister Jamet, former special pioneers in France, went to the island of Raiat  a where the congregation of 24 publishers had only one elder. Soon Brother Jamet was appointed to replace Brother Inaudi as a circuit overseer because the Inaudis were expecting a child.

By 1973 the number of congregations grew to four, and in 1974 another congregation was formed with the help of a Tahitian family that moved to the island of Bora-Bora. For the 1974 Memorial 740 attended, a remarkable number compared with the total of 199 publishers.

BROTHERS KNORR AND FRANZ VISIT TAHITI

Then, the brothers joyously learned that Brothers Knorr and Franz would be visiting Tahiti as

part of their 1975 world service tour. This was Brother Knorr's first trip to Tahiti. More than 700 people were present to hear their encouraging talks. Brothers Knorr and Franz invited the overseers to meet with them and informed them that the Society was considering the opening of a branch office in French Polynesia! The surprised elders unanimously agreed that a local branch office was much needed, considering the extent of the territory. At the same meeting, Brother Alain Jamet was recommended to serve as overseer for the new branch office that was to open April 1, 1975. So from that time, oversight of the work in this part of the Pacific was transferred from the Fiji branch to the branch in Tahiti.

Jehovah has indeed blessed the brothers' activity in this remote area, so that today Tahiti has more than 500 publishers. But the story of Tahiti's thrilling progress as a separate branch of the Society will be told on another occasion.

Now let us consider another French-speaking territory that has been blessed with theocratic progress—New Caledonia.

NEW CALEDONIA

New Caledonia, an overseas territory of France, consists of about 25 islands located some 1,120 kilometers (700 mi) east of the north Australian coast. Its name is taken from New Caledonia, the territory's main island, which is one of the largest islands in the Pacific. It is about 400 kilometers (250 mi) long and 50 kilometers (30 mi) wide. The population is about 145,000. New Caledonians are French citizens, and half of them live in the area

of the modern French-style city of Nouméa, the territorial capital.

The native New Caledonians are Melanesians, but now there are almost as many Europeans. As elsewhere in the islands, there is a great mixture of island people in New Caledonia, and on the main island about 35 different languages are spoken. However, everyone uses French to communicate.

Cannibalism was common until the end of the 19th century. When Christendom's missionaries arrived about 1840, the reaction of the natives was quite violent—several missionaries were killed and eaten. But with the support of the French army, Catholic missions were set up on the main island, where they predominate today. The London Missionary Society established missions on the islands of Maré and Lifou, and this led to much bloodshed, as religious wars broke out, with Catholics attempting to drive out Protestants and vice versa. Today, around 90,000 persons adhere to the Catholic religion and about 34,000 belong to the Protestant churches.

QUIET BEGINNINGS TO THE KINGDOM WORK

In 1954 John and Ellen Hubler arrived from Australia to serve where the need was greater. "We set out with a tourist visa for one month," relates Brother Hubler, "and with the utmost trust in Jehovah to aid us."

The Australian branch advised Brother Hubler to get a job as quickly as possible, hoping that his employer would assist them to get visa extensions. He got a job, but by this time their one-month visa

was expiring. So he approached his employer, who arranged to provide bond for them; thus they were able to get a six-month extension. Brother Hubler recalls: "At the end of the first month, when the ship sailed back to Australia, we had the greatest joy, standing on the wharf, watching it sail without us, happy in the knowledge that we had successfully carried out the first part of our instructions."

They started the second stage of their work—visiting outer areas of the island and speaking the truth to the people. They had no literature and used their English Bibles. They soon noticed that what they preached was received with eager interest, and thus plans were made for return visits.

Since they had no literature to place with interested people, Brother Hubler requested some from the Australian branch. They were advised that an engineer on a cargo ship was bringing a parcel and that this interested New Caledonian would deliver it to them. Thus the first supply of French literature arrived. Later an orchestra leader on a tourist ship brought more literature. On this occasion the ship's orchestra was playing one night at the Town Hall, so the Hublers had to go to the ball to get the literature. Finally, Brother Hubler ordered some literature to be sent through post office channels, and he got it through customs with no problem.

OTHERS ARRIVE AND A CONGREGATION GROWS

After their celebrating the first Memorial in New Caledonia with just the two of them present, others gradually arrived to serve where the need

was greater. Some families from Australia could remain for only a few months, but others stayed on for a couple of years. These zealous brothers did a wonderful work in laying the foundation for a congregation.

In 1956 the branch directed that the Hublers start to preach in Nouméa itself, while the other brothers worked in the outlying areas. Soon interested persons in Nouméa began coming to the meetings held by the congregation formed in August that year. The new congregation started with 9 publishers, grew rapidly to 14, then to 21 and 26, and ended the year with 32.

In 1957 the circuit overseer visited the congregation for the first time, staying for one month. Soon after the visit the brothers were instructed to concentrate their efforts in Nouméa. April 1958 saw the first of the local people start out in the field service and then get baptized.

On September 1, 1958, the oversight of the work in New Caledonia came under the new branch in Fiji. The brothers were thrilled that same year to have their first circuit assembly, even though they were a small group with a peak of 41 publishers.

BACK INTO FULL-TIME SERVICE

When Brother Hubler went to New Caledonia, he had to give up the pioneer work, but he had always wanted to resume full-time service. So he applied for permission to stay as a full-time minister. He went to see an official who was favorable to the truth, the secretary to the governor, and Brother Hubler was told to go ahead. Thus in 1959 he started out in the special pioneer work.

"One day the secretary called me into his office and asked me when my visa was to be renewed," Brother Hubler recalls. "I told him I had five months left. He then said that he was being sent away on a mission but expected to be back before then, and in the meantime, his assistant had instructions to give us all the help that we needed. But things did not turn out as he expected. He never did return. Instead, his place was taken by a man who was a member of Catholic Action. Then the authorities began to refuse visa renewals for the Australian brothers."

When the time came for the Hublers to renew their visas, they received a quick reply—no renewal! So, after five years in the country, they had to leave, the last of 31 brothers and sisters who had gone to serve where the need was greater. Brother Hubler is still in the full-time service as a traveling overseer in New Zealand.

OPPOSITION PLANS THWARTED

With the Australians gone, the clergy thought that the Witnesses were finished. They even announced from their pulpits that the local Witnesses would now come back to church. They were disappointed. Instead, the Kingdom work increased.

In 1960 all the Society's publications were banned, but the brothers carried on, using just the Bible. Then the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained* was printed showing the publisher's name as being the International Bible Students Association, and it was used in the preaching work. Some magazines still arrived, though many times postal officials destroyed them. To get around the ban on

The Watchtower, the brothers had the magazines printed with blank covers, and then they could be distributed with no trouble.

Meantime, efforts were made to have the ban lifted on the publications, and in 1963 the Society won the case. So the Privy Council removed the ban from all the publications except *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* The ban on *Awake!* was lifted in 1969, but the brothers had to wait until 1975 before the ban on *The Watchtower* was removed.

THE KINGDOM WORK MOVES AHEAD

During 1962 the work moved ahead, and 37 reported sharing in the preaching work. In 1966 the number of publishers increased to 104, and the work spread out around the island with some of the local brothers being assigned as special pioneers. In 1975 the brothers were delighted to welcome their first Gilead graduates, Brother and Sister Fosset.

For some years the congregation meetings were held in Brother Jonvaux's garage, which was an aircraft hangar from World War II. Until 1975 this was also used as the location for circuit assemblies. Then in 1975 the Anse Vata Congregation in Nouméa bought a piece of land and started to build the first real Kingdom Hall in New Caledonia. It was completed within a year and was dedicated in June 1976.

In that same month the Society opened up a branch office in New Caledonia, and this new branch now took oversight of Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna Islands. The number of publishers in New Caledonia had grown from the 2 Australians in 1954 to 315 in 1975. Presently New Caledonia

has over 500 publishers, with the number gathering for the Memorial in 1983 reaching 1,456. Thus, in another part of the Pacific, the Kingdom good news is being preached vigorously.

But now let us turn our attention to Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) and see how the preaching work got started there.

VANUATU

Vanuatu forms a Y-shaped chain of about 80 islands stretching for more than 800 kilometers (500 mi) in the southwest Pacific Ocean. However, 90 percent of the land area is made up of only the ten largest islands. Vanuatu is situated about 960 kilometers (600 mi) west of Fiji. Half the islands are islets and rocky outcrops; the other half are mountainous, and those in the northern and central regions are covered with lush, tropical forests. Heavy rainfall and a humid, tropical climate characterize the country. The people are of Melanesian origin, and most of them live in villages.

Since the 125,000 inhabitants of the country speak more than a hundred languages, the need for good communication has led to the development of a lingua franca called Bislama, which combines mainly English words with Melanesian grammar. Most of the people of Vanuatu use Bislama, along with French and English. Both French and English were introduced as a result of the New Hebrides' being jointly ruled by France and Great Britain. This ended on July 30, 1980, when the New Hebrides was declared independent and renamed Vanuatu.

Over the years workers came in from Malaysia,

Vietnam, China, Wallis Island and Kiribati, as well as from Tonga and Fiji. Thus, many races can be seen in the streets of the two main cities, Vila, the capital (on the island of Efate), and Santo on the island of Espiritu Santo.

CUSTOMS AND RELIGION

The life of the Ni-Vanuatu was and still is to a certain extent centered around the worship of ancestors. People live with the fear of the spirits of their ancestors. Spiritism thus greatly affected their beliefs, and this even led to cannibalism. For example, on the island of Ambrim, to enter a spiritistic community, the entrant had to kill and eat a man.

Though some of Christendom's early missionaries were killed, the churches gradually gained influence and power, and they apportioned the islands among themselves, the Anglicans taking the north and the Presbyterians the south. Today the churches are much involved in politics and thus strengthen their hold over the people. Presbyterians number about 50,000, Roman Catholics some 20,000 and Anglicans 17,500.

Considering this background, one can understand why the work of Jehovah's Witnesses has developed slowly in this part of the world.

LIGHT OF TRUTH STARTS TO SHINE

In the 1930's Brother George Winton sailed through the islands, spreading the first seeds of truth. Even though his boat was wrecked on the island of Paama, this did not stop him. Evidently he was deported around 1940 for preaching the good

news. Another brother, Alfred Rice, worked among the people, but he died on Paama from malaria.

In 1958 Lewis Newton and his wife arrived from Australia to serve where the need was greater. "When we sailed into the port of Vila we were struck by the beauty of the bay with the houses visible here and there among the luxuriant foliage," Brother Newton remembers. "Everywhere there were the bright colors of hibiscus, bougainvillea and variegated leaves. The town consisted of about a dozen tiny stores and two larger stores."

Brother Newton obtained work for six months with a copra-plantation owner and thus he and his wife traveled to their new home on the other side of the island. The Newtons worked with caution, trying to get the preaching started. Though not knowing it then, they were to spend about 25 years there before returning to Australia in 1983.

After attending a convention in Fiji in 1959, the Newtons arrived home and found that the plantation owner had turned against them because of the truth and had dismissed them from his employ. They had used all their money to go to the convention and could not pay the money for bond to remain in the country. However, two planters whom they barely knew offered to lend them the money, and a week later, on the other side of the island, Brother Newton found another job with a French planter.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CIRCUIT OVERSEER AND OTHERS

With this move they were now only some 20 kilometers (12 mi) from Vila, and with the aid of a

borrowed, dilapidated car, they did a little witnessing in the town. "We were very encouraged" says Brother Newton, "when the circuit overseer, Len Helberg, visited us in April 1960."

During 1961 a Canadian couple, Brother and Sister Robert Hinsche, arrived and were able to stay for a few months until the Immigration Department forced them to leave. During all the time that the brothers had been on this island they had been placing many copies of the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, and the native folk took them back to their islands. Thus the seeds of truth were being sown. On one occasion Audrey Newton was surrounded in the car by what appeared to be a threatening group of native people. How relieved she was to find out that all they wanted were copies of the book!

In 1963 the Newtons were thrilled when the five members of the Bates family, of whom four were publishers, arrived from England. For the first time in five years, the Newtons had others with them for the Memorial. Now six publishers were working on the island of Efate.

FIRST NATIVE PUBLISHER

One day Sister Jeanne Bates was witnessing to people living on Roman Catholic Mission land. One of the Bible studies started there was with Helen Pita, a native woman, who could neither read nor write. It required much patience and ingenuity to study with her, not only because she was illiterate but also because she lived under difficult conditions. Her husband drank away their money, and she had to raise ten children. She made slow but

steady progress, though, and became the first local publisher, baptized in 1967. She is still serving Jehovah loyally to the best of her ability.

A definite step forward was taken in 1964 with the organizing of all the meetings in a downtown location. Regularly between 10 and 20 persons attended. But the government refused to renew Brother Bates' contract, so in 1966, after three years in Vanuatu, the family returned to England.

CIRCUIT ASSEMBLIES AND GROWTH

The small band in Vanuatu rejoiced in their first circuit assembly in August 1967. This was held in the front yard of the Newtons' home. (By now they had moved into town.) Len Helberg, the circuit overseer, showed the film *The New World Society in Action* to about 40 people.

In 1970 Brother Allan Taylor and his family from Australia joined the brothers, bringing the total number of publishers for the 1971 service year to 15. They stayed on and worked faithfully with the others until 1975, when they moved to Fiji. About the time this family arrived, the branch encouraged French-speaking brothers to move there, and a number of families came from France.

For the circuit assembly scheduled for March 1971, the few local brothers were greatly encouraged to greet about 40 brothers from New Caledonia. The carport they used for meetings was bursting at the seams with 147 attending the showing of one of the Society's films, the commentary for which was given simultaneously in French and Bislama.

In 1972 the brothers were able to purchase some

land on the outskirts of town and started construction on a Kingdom Hall. With just the posts and the roof, and coconut leaves for walls, they used it for the next circuit assembly. To help finance the hall, local brothers made money by carving small boats that were then sold to the tourists.

LITERATURE AND MISSIONARIES TO MEET THE NEED

When the new branch started in New Caledonia in June 1976, Vanuatu came under its oversight. The Governing Body approved the sending of missionaries into Vanuatu, but all efforts to get permission for British missionaries to enter failed. The first ones who were allowed to enter were Brother and Sister Casteran from France. This was in 1977. That year also saw the translation of the *Watchtower* magazine into Bislama, and since then all the meetings have been conducted mainly in this language.

While at Vila, Brother Casteran witnessed to an old man called Jonah Sak-Sak. He studied for three months, attended the district convention in 1978 and then returned to his island of Ambrim. *The Watchtower* in Bislama was sent to him by mail. Later, some brothers decided to visit Jonah. How surprised they were to find that he held meetings regularly in a nice Kingdom Hall, one that he had built! Just by reading *The Watchtower*, he understood the need to hold meetings regularly and to be active in the preaching work. At this writing a group of 19 people meet for the *Watchtower* Study in his village, and another group started by him meets on another part of the island. Though in

poor health and not yet baptized, Jonah conducts 40 Bible studies.

The 38 publishers who reported in 1975 grew to 57 in four years. During one month in 1979 a peak of 64 reported field service, and 159 attended the Memorial that year.

INDEPENDENCE AND ITS EFFECT

The brothers were delighted to receive the *Truth* book in Bislama early in 1980. This was certainly a timely provision. Why so? Because with independence from Great Britain and France close at hand, the country was entering a new period. Independence came July 30, 1980, and with it many Europeans, including many of the brothers, had to go back to their home countries. Then in November the government refused to grant visas to all the missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses working in Vanuatu, and by the end of January 1981, they had all gone to other assignments. Thus the Ni-Vanuatu brothers were on their own, apart from just a few European brothers who were granted visas to stay.

After independence just 34 publishers remained in two well-established congregations. But Jehovah's work moved ahead, and today there are over 50 publishers who rejoiced when 211 attended the 1983 Memorial.

SOUTH PACIFIC HEARS THE GOOD NEWS

Though unique in the world for isolation, the islands of the Pacific have heard and continue hearing the message of God's Kingdom. Brothers and sisters serving where the need is greater, mostly

from Australia, have contributed immensely to the present spiritual prosperity. By now six different branches have oversight of the South Pacific field: Australia, Fiji, Guam, New Caledonia, New Zealand and Tahiti. This has not been easy. With so many different governments, persistent efforts by officials to hinder the work, plus travel and communication problems, it has been only through Jehovah's power that the Kingdom work has prospered.

Due to the vastness of the Pacific Ocean, contact with the brothers has been limited, and traveling overseers have played an especially important role by keeping the brothers in touch with one another and with God's organization. One year a district overseer logged some 48,000 kilometers (30,000 mi), visiting the scattered groups. This has been done at considerable financial expense, and the brothers in that part of the world, generally poor in material possessions, are grateful to the brothers elsewhere for their generous support in making the preaching work possible there. As the apostle Paul said, there has been "an equalizing."—2 Cor. 8:14.

The result of this activity is now evident with a "great crowd" sharing in the lifesaving preaching and teaching work. All sorts of men and women, from different races, speaking many languages and from various countries, have accepted God's way of salvation. (Rev. 7:9, 10) Eagerly the Witnesses there, as everywhere, look forward to the time under Jehovah's Kingdom when they will be able to sit each one in the shade of his stately palm tree, enjoying in fullness Kingdom blessings, including the physical beauty of the islands of the South Pacific.

LOVE—"A PERFECT BOND OF UNION"

This has been a thrilling year of increase for Jehovah's Witnesses. Few of Jehovah's people living some decades ago could have foreseen such phenomenal growth in Kingdom publishers as was recorded this past service year. The expansion in the building of branches and the renovating of old ones, along with the great variety of other activities taking place, is nothing short of extraordinary. Especially this year, has there been felt a growing spirit of unity and self-sacrifice among the brotherhood. The enthusiasm for the pioneer ministry has been exceptional. As a result, the happiness of God's people at meetings and in the service has been marvelous to behold!

We can say humbly with the psalmist that Jehovah has richly crowned the year with his goodness. (Ps. 65:11) This is evident not only by the growth in publishers but also by the unity and peace that have been ours to enjoy in this disunited world. Oh, what a grand privilege it is to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses at this time of the end!

The developments in the world, which this brief report of Kingdom activity touches on, are significant as part of "the sign . . . of the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3) As mankind advances ever deeper into the time of the end, we are forewarned by the Scriptures that conditions will grow even more difficult to deal with, more critical. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) We trust that the reading of this report about the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses for the 1983 service year will increase the reader's faith in Jehovah and in his organization, and that

it will strengthen our hope in the Kingdom and our confidence in the many spiritual provisions for gaining everlasting life.

Throughout the 1983 service year Jehovah's Witnesses have kept before themselves the Scriptural command found at Colossians 3:14; it is indeed a challenging one. It tells them: "Besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union." That inspired command is being carried out by Jehovah's Witnesses in all the earth, to Jehovah's glory.

The millions of people who attended the "Kingdom Unity" District Conventions this year were able to appreciate more fully what is involved in 'clothing themselves with love.' The unity and love that permeated the conventions could be seen and felt by all in attendance. Especially was this evident when the declaration of their unity was presented.

Let all of Jehovah's Witnesses who responded with a "Yes" to what was said in that Declaration of Unity earnestly continue to display an active and meaningful faith. And our prayer is that all of Jehovah's Witnesses may continue worthy of the love that Jehovah has expressed toward them, always appreciating the privilege they have of bearing his name and of publishing the good news of the Kingdom under Christ.

The past year has taught Jehovah's Witnesses that the big thing today is to be active in God's organization, proclaiming to all the good news of his Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14) Those who are to gain everlasting life must now take in knowledge of Jehovah and of his Son, Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) Fully appreciating this, Jehovah's Witnesses have stressed

the house-to-house ministry and the need to search out interested persons and to conduct Bible studies with them.—Acts 20:20; Matt. 28:19, 20.

Jehovah's people feel the urgency of the times. They are well aware that they are living in the last days of this system of things. With the increase in publishers, there has come a great demand from the field for more literature. To meet that demand, new branch buildings have been built in a number of countries—Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands, to name a few. Great expansion has taken place at the world headquarters of the Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, with the purchase of buildings and new printing equipment. Construction continues at Watchtower Farms, also in Germany, South Africa and in other parts of the earth.

It is important that all who love righteousness and who desire to live under Kingdom rule recognize the one united world organization that Jehovah is using to get the preaching work done. (1 Cor. 1:10) As loyal servants of Jehovah, may we stand firm in one spirit, "with one soul striving side by side for the faith of the good news." (Phil. 1:27) We rejoice to be a part of the only true international brotherhood on the face of the earth.

All readers are assured of our warmest love and best wishes as they heed the advice of the apostle Peter: "Go on growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity."—2 Pet. 3:18.

Your brothers,

GOVERNING BODY OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

YEARTEXT FOR 1984

"Speak the word of God fearlessly."—Phil. 1:14.

The Bible gives many accounts of those who spoke the Word of God fearlessly and who were richly blessed in doing so. It must have required great courage for Enoch to proclaim Jehovah's judgment in pre-Flood days, convicting ungodly sinners concerning the shocking things that they spoke against him. Noah had to be fearless in preaching righteousness in that doomed world of ungodly people. But such fearlessness in walking with God had its abundant reward.—Jude 15; 2 Pet. 2:5; Gen. 5:24; 6:9, 22; 7:1, 23.

In later times Jehovah strengthened his faithful prophets to speak out fearlessly in warning Jerusalem of its approaching doom. For example, he assured the youthful Jeremiah that he would make him like a fortified city against his adversaries. Likewise, God commissioned Ezekiel, saying: "The sons insolent of face and hard of heart—I am sending you to them, and you must say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said.' And as for them, whether they will hear or will refrain—for they are a rebellious house—they will certainly know also that a prophet himself happened to be in the midst of them." Those ancient prophets sounded the warning, fearlessly.—Ezek. 2:4, 5; Jer. 1:6, 18.

However, the greatest example of fearlessness in proclaiming an unpopular message is that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even the officers sent to arrest him returned empty-handed, exclaiming: "Never has another man spoken like this." Courageously, Jesus testified concerning God's

Kingdom until his lips were silenced in death.—John 7:46; 18:36, 37.

Jesus encouraged his disciples to show a like fearlessness in proclaiming the Word of God. In his service talk recorded at Matthew 10:5-42, he told them not to fear those who may kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather they should fear Jehovah God, in whom rests their hope for everlasting life. Like their Master, those disciples were outspoken in making known the truth. Thus, the rulers came to "recognize about them that they used to be with Jesus."—Acts 4:13.

What of today? As Jehovah's Witnesses, we are privileged to be the one organized body of Christians united worldwide in following the pattern set by the ancient prophets, by Jesus and by his early disciples. In Jehovah's strength we press on fearlessly with our God-given work. (Zech. 4:6) Concentration camps, prisons, beatings, family opposition, reproaches heaped on us at our place of work or at school—none of these can deter or silence us as we boldly proclaim the Word of God. No doubt this year of 1984 will mark a further surge forward in our Kingdom work, as we meet the challenge of worsening world conditions by "showing all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly."

DAILY TEXTS AND COMMENTS

There is a text for each day and a comment on that text. The comments are taken from *The Watchtower* (w) of the year 1983. Figures following the date of the *Watchtower* issue refer to paragraphs in the first study article, where further comment on the text may be found. When "a" follows the paragraph number, the comment is found in the second study article; when "b" is shown, it refers to the third study article.

Sunday, January 1

This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.—Matt. 24:14.

This prophecy of Jesus serves as a command to all of his dedicated disciples. In obedience they have already pushed the preaching of the Kingdom message into 205 lands and islands of the seas. Also, the glorious message is being conveyed to mankind in 180 languages, not including the sign languages. No doubt, many other inhabitants of earth are yet to be reached by all the modern means of communication, so that before the end virtually "all the inhabited earth" gets a witness. However, what has already been the response to the Kingdom preaching worldwide—yes, in spite of all the opposition and persecution that Jesus said would occur as part of the sign of his presence in the heavenly Kingdom and of the conclusion of the system of things? There has been a sharp division of the inhabitants of the earth for and against the Kingdom. *w 1/1 8-10*

Monday, January 2

Woe . . . , because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.—Rev. 12:12.

Suppose you learned that someone had been hired to kill you. What if you knew that right now he was stalking you, just waiting for the best moment to attack. That could be terrifying! Yet Jesus faced a similar situation, even as we read at John 7:1. However, despite the danger to his life, in 32 C.E. Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Festival of

Tabernacles. On that occasion, some began to say: "This is the man they are seeking to kill, is it not?" (John 7:25) Why were people trying to murder Jesus? Because they had been put up to it by the Devil! Jesus himself said, as recorded in John 8:44: "The Devil . . . was a manslayer when he began." So, then, we should not be surprised that the Devil is out to get godly persons today, especially since he has been thrown out of heaven. From the above we can see that Satan and his demons are waging an all-out war on us! *w 1/15 1-3*

Tuesday, January 3

God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame.—1 Cor. 1:27.

The worldly wise scoff at the idea that by exercising faith in Christ's sacrifice everlasting life in a righteous new system can be enjoyed. That Christ rose from the dead and is now the powerful King of God's Kingdom is pure fantasy as far as they are concerned. Yet God purposes to have this heartwarming message made known worldwide. So to anyone who would become his servant he gives the assignment to preach this good news of his Kingdom. Since this message amounts to foolishness to the world, whom does God use to preach it? Paul answers as above. Are you the type of person that God would choose to do the work he wants done in the earth today? If so, it means that you must be prepared to be viewed as a fool by the world. So to be a successful servant of Jehovah God you must be willing to proceed in a way that will make you seem foolish from the world's standpoint. *w 2/1 3-5a*

Wednesday, January 4

[Christ] has manifested himself once for all time at the conclusion of the systems of things to put sin away through the sacrifice of himself.—Heb. 9:26.

The Jewish epoch ended first after Christ's death. (Gal. 3:24, 25) Paul could thus write the above regarding the manifestation of God's Son. That conclusion was soon to become undeniably clear, with the destruction of the temple. When Jesus foretold that destruction, his disciples asked, "When will these things be?" (Matt. 23:37-24:3) Jesus replied that there would be wars, food shortages, earthquakes, pestilences and an extensive Kingdom preaching work before the end would come. Those words came true in the generation between Jesus' giving the prophecy and Paul's writing Hebrews. Christ also foretold for Jerusalem a 'great tribulation.' (Matt. 24:21) The destructive tribulation that came on Jerusalem in 70 C.E. was unparalleled for that city. Yet it was only a miniature fulfillment. We are seeing the major fulfillment in our day; no question about that. *w 2/15 4*

Thursday, January 5

Blessed be Jehovah . . . because he has . . . [granted] us . . . the privilege of fearlessly rendering sacred service to him.—Luke 1:68, 74.

How grateful all of us should be to Jehovah and his Son for equipping us so well for spiritual warfare! Like John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, we feel impelled to praise Jehovah. We are now in position to form up in battle line to engage the enemies of God and Christ. Aspiring to be like God in majesty and power, Satan has propagated his lying doc-

trines far and wide. He contradicts the true God and deceptively claims that he himself is the fountain of knowledge. He teaches that man has no need for Jehovah. These ideas and many more are the "reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God." (2 Cor. 10:5) These need to be exposed so that victims of delusion may be mentally and spiritually liberated. We have the necessary armor: faith, truth, righteousness, the hope of salvation, the Word of God and the good news of peace.—Eph. 6:14-17. *w 3/1 14-16*

Friday, January 6

Exult, you people, and be joyful forever in what I am creating.—Isa. 65:18.

It is to all of God's people that the above invitation goes forth. There is every reason to exult! For, shortly, Jehovah will vindicate his illustrious name by destroying all opposers. Then, the new heavens will be in complete control! And what a glorious picture Revelation 21:9-27 gives of the bride of the Lamb coming down out of heaven from God and having his glory! Ablaze, figuratively, with every kind of precious gem, and lighted by the glory of God himself, this New Jerusalem serves wonderfully in its role of dispensing to the nations of mankind the "water of life," which flows out "from the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 22:1, 2, 17) Logically, therefore, it is with regard to "the bride, the Lamb's wife," brought with Christ, her bridegroom, into the governmental "new heavens," that Jehovah says: "For here I am creating Jerusalem a cause for joyfulness and her people a cause for exultation."—Isa. 65:18. *w 3/15 13, 14a*

Saturday, January 7

The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.—Rom. 8:21.

Mankind desperately needs to be freed from the many distressing conditions that have prevailed for so long. But it is beyond human ability to bring such freedoms. "Many are the plans in the heart of a man, but the counsel of Jehovah is what will stand." (Prov. 19:21) That "counsel" of Jehovah promises that "he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore." (Rev. 21:4) What an inspiring outlook! How well it fits the description of the real freedom that the Bible says will come from Jehovah! Bringing about such marvelous freedoms is the government originated by Jehovah to rule the entire earth, the heavenly Kingdom of God. By means of it God's will is going to take place "as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:10) It is our blessed privilege to make that Kingdom known. *w 4/15 1, 2a*

Sunday, January 8

Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you . . . for my sake.—Matt. 5:11.

When a compromise constitutes an act of worship, no longer are we fit to represent Jehovah's Kingdom interests. We can be sure that a single act of breaking our integrity would bring glee to the Devil, and surely we do not want to make him happy. Rather, we seek to make Jehovah's heart rejoice by integrity keeping that gives him a reply to the Great Taunter. (Prov. 27:11) Our heavenly Father could prevent the per-

secution of his people. But he chooses to allow it, and knowing why will help us to be happy though persecuted. It has to do with the issue of universal sovereignty. Every witness of Jehovah who maintains integrity under Devil-inspired testing proves Satan to be a liar and gives evidence that even an imperfect human can remain faithful to God though sorely tested or persecuted. The loyal individual upholds God's side of the issue and supports Jehovah's right to rule as Universal Sovereign. *w 5/1 10, 11*

Monday, January 9

The older man to the chosen lady and to her children, whom I truly love, and not I alone, but all those also who have come to know the truth, because of the truth that remains in us, and it will be with us forever.

—2 John 1, 2.

In addressing "the chosen lady," John may have been referring to a particular congregation or he may have been referring to an individual Christian woman. In any event, this 'chosen lady and her children' were truly loved by John and other witnesses of Jehovah who had come to know "the truth." That "truth" was the whole body of teaching that centered on Jesus Christ. Firmly clinging to it was essential for salvation. (Eph. 1:13, 14) One basic reason why past and present witnesses of Jehovah have love among themselves is that they have a common love for the truth. It remains in them in that it keeps residing in their hearts. This truth will stay with such genuine Christians forever, as a constant companion. It is, indeed, our cherished possession and we thank our heavenly Father for it. *w 4/1 4-6*

Tuesday, January 10

Down the great dragon was hurled, . . . and his angels were hurled down with him.

—Rev. 12:9.

Shortly before the Flood other angels joined Satan in his rebellion against Jehovah. The Bible reveals that the attractive daughters of men served as a lure to the angels. Some of these left their heavenly positions of service to come to earth to have sexual relations with those beautiful women. What they did was just as wrong as were the homosexual acts committed by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 6:1, 2; Jude 6, 7) When the Floodwaters fell, the angels shed their materialized bodies and returned to heaven. Although being denied any longer the ability to materialize human bodies to satisfy their unnatural sexual desires, these angels have been very active in corrupting the human family morally. The great increase today in sexual immorality of all kinds is a direct result of their having been cast out of heaven and confined to the vicinity of the earth.—1 Tim. 4:1. *w 1/15 17*

Wednesday, January 11

The speech about the torture stake is foolishness to those who are perishing.—1 Cor. 1:18.

Would you dismiss as insignificant what you knew was an important task simply because others deemed it mere folly and a sign of weakness? No one, of course, likes to be labeled a fool or a weakling—not even a child. But suppose the assignment to perform this important task came from a highly intelligent dignitary. Would you not be willing to swallow your pride and accept the assignment? Millions

of persons throughout history have done just that. What task have these people accepted, and from whom has the assignment come? The answer is found in Paul's first letter to Christians in ancient Corinth. (1 Cor. 1:18-21) To the so-called wise and intellectual ones of the world the speech about Christ pouring out his lifeblood on a torture stake is foolishness. But "God saw good through the foolishness of what is preached to save those believing." *w 2/1 1-3a*

Thursday, January 12

They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.—John 17:16.

We as Christians can benefit from the calamity that befell the Jews in 70 C.E. by examining timely Bible counsel that evidently was written nine years or so before that destruction. It is in the book of Hebrews, which the apostle Paul wrote to Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem and Judea. Our brothers back there were in a very difficult situation. Though Judea seemed to be firmly under the control of Rome, many of the Jews were rebellious. (Acts 5:36, 37) Imagine the fierce pressure such Jews would have put on Jesus' followers who, being "no part of the world," would not side with the Jews against Rome. Another cause of persecution against Hebrew Christians was the Jews' feeling of superiority because they had been chosen by God, taken into the Law covenant and given a way of worship involving the Levitical priesthood. For similar and other reasons true followers of Christ can expect to be and are persecuted in modern times. *w 2/15 1-3*

Friday, January 13

Look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.—Heb. 12:2.

Truly, we can be joyful that the Messianic King, Christ Jesus, now reigns in a heavenly Jerusalem. This is the city "belonging to heaven" mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11, and for which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob 'reached out.' They "publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land" of Canaan, for they were earnestly seeking "the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God." But as with the "great crowd," who today have hope of everlasting life on earth, "the fulfillment of the promise" to those men of old must wait until anointed Christians have received their inheritance in the heavenly Kingdom. (Heb. 11:8-16, 39, 40; Rev. 7:9) Hebrews chapter 12 goes on to encourage us, even as noted in the words above. *w 3/15 1, 2a*

Saturday, January 14

Trueness itself will sprout out of the very earth, and righteousness itself will look down from the very heavens.—Ps. 85:11.

Under God's Kingdom it will be one world, under one government. What a blessing it will be to have an administration that will deal with everybody with kindness, justice and impartiality! Speaking of the heavenly King, Jesus Christ, the Bible prophetically says: "With righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give re-

proof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth." (Isa. 11:3, 4) Yes, Christ will do what is right. He proved that while he was on earth, for he spoke the truth and exposed hypocrisy. He upheld the cause of the downtrodden and did not cater to the rich and powerful, although he did not discriminate against them either. With such a proved, capable Administrator working under Jehovah's direction, the above words of the psalmist will come true. What a privilege is ours to tell others about these things! *w 4/15 6a*

Sunday, January 15

Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them.

—Matt. 28:19, 20.

Those who have left us and now oppose do not find joy in sharing in the great work of making disciples. Rather, they subtly approach others who are already Witnesses, speaking in such a way as to weaken the resolve of these faithful ones to carry out in full their dedication to Jehovah. The thought is conveyed that since Jehovah is such a loving God, he surely would not require all those wanting to please him to endure the persecution that preaching brings. This subtle approach can be difficult for some to cope with. It is true that Jehovah is loving and that he wants us to be good persons. He certainly wants Christians to demonstrate love for their neighbors by treating others in a kind way. But that is not all! Those who oppose often forget that Jehovah has also said—principally through his Son—that we should be disciple makers, teaching people. *w 3/1 12, 14, 15a*

Monday, January 16

There will be with us undeserved kindness, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, with truth and love.

—2 John 3.

Divine blessings are assured to those holding faithfully to the "truth." *Undeserved kindness* comes from both Jehovah and Jesus in that sinful humans "are being declared righteous by [God's] undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:23, 24) Similarly, the heavenly Father is the Source of *mercy*, but it comes to us imperfect humans through Christ. To have *peace* with Jehovah, sinners also need to have their transgressions atoned for, and this has been made possible through Jesus' death as a ransom sacrifice. John added the words "with truth and love." He may thus have been saying that 'along with truth and love' genuine Christians enjoy undeserved kindness, mercy and peace; or John could have meant that Jehovah's servants would experience these blessings if they remained in the truth and continued to display love. *w 4/1 7, 8*

Tuesday, January 17

Get out from the midst of her, keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah.—Isa. 52:11.

Jehovah commands that we, as his witnesses, keep ourselves clean, that is, holy and pure, righteous and chaste. Is that not the way Jehovah himself is? Why, time and again he is referred to as "the Holy One of Israel!" (Isa. 12:6; 29:19; 41:14; Jer. 51:5) And, fittingly, we read at Revelation 4:8: "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah God, the Almighty." Moreover, is not God's

Son, Jesus Christ, called "the Holy One of God"? (John 6:69) Are not God's heavenly ministers termed "holy angels"? (Mark 8:38) Is not God's active force called his *holy spirit*? And is not God's Word rightly referred to as "the *holy writings*"? (2 Tim. 3:15) Clearly, then, as Jehovah's Witnesses we must also be clean and holy, even as we are commanded at 1 Peter 1:15, 16: "In accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct, because it is written: 'You must be holy, because I am holy.'" *w 5/1 4, 5b*

Wednesday, January 18

There will be . . . on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth.

—Luke 21:25, 26.

Since most of mankind today pay no attention to our calculation of God's time, and since Christendom with its hundreds of sects and denominations dispute its correctness, have those opposers who far outnumber Jehovah's Witnesses won the hot dispute concerning the setting up of God's Kingdom by Christ in the heavens in 1914? The fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy concerning what would mark the conclusion of the system of things thunders back to us the answer No! Seventy years after 1914 we see in existence the state of affairs foretold by Jesus as given above. Properly, then, the ending of the Gentile Times in the latter half of 1914 still stands on a historical basis as one of the fundamental Kingdom truths to which we must hold today. And not only hold to them but be diligent in making them known to others. *w 1/1 5*

Thursday, January 19

In your skirts there have been found the blood marks of the souls of the innocent poor ones. . . . They are upon all these.
—Jer. 2:34.

The Jerusalem that twice apostatized well pictures another apostate system—the organized religion of Christendom. Just as the hypocritical rulers of Jerusalem gave lip worship to Jehovah's Law, so the clergy of Christendom claim to speak for the God of the Bible. But, says Jesus Christ, "by their fruits you will recognize those men." (Matt. 7:20) And what kind of "fruits" has modern-day Christendom produced? Have these provided any "Foundation of Twofold Peace," the meaning of the word Jerusalem? No. Rather, there has been the fruitage of two dreadful world wars, both of which broke out in the realm of Christendom and were fought with the blessing of the clergy on both sides. Truly, the prophetic words addressed by Jehovah to apostate Jerusalem apply even more pointedly to the leaders of religious Christendom. It is our duty to expose these. *w 3/15 10*

Friday, January 20

It is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention . . . that we may never drift away.—Heb. 2:1.

No doubt Satan has had much to do with developing material things and pleasures that distract so many people from serving Jehovah God. Do not underestimate our foe the Devil. He has become a master at sneak attack. How can you know when you are being taken in by Satan's subtle lure of materialism? You can if any form of relaxation or pursuit of ma-

terial possessions has begun to interfere with your study of the Bible, regular attendance at Christian meetings or weekly field ministry. Really, there is a need to be watchful. A materialistic lure can cause you to drift away by simply absorbing more and more of your time, interest and energy. When a boat drifts you may not detect that it is moving. You may say it is not moving at all. But proof that it is drifting is seen in that it gradually changes positions. It is similar with a person who drifts away from God and His organization. *w 1/15 13, 14*

Saturday, January 21

I saw [an] angel flying in mid-heaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare . . . to those who dwell on the earth.
—Rev. 14:6.

The angel Gabriel, acting as an evangelist, first brought good news to Zechariah and later to Mary telling her the glad tidings of the coming birth of Jesus. Months later, shepherds were startled by an angelic evangelist announcing: "Have no fear, for, look! I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have." Then this angel was joined by a multitude of spirit creatures confirming this message of good news. (Luke 2:8-14) God's power of sponsoring the good news through angels continued through the first-century history of the Christian congregation. An angel released the imprisoned apostles and commanded them to keep on speaking. (Acts 5:20) The apostle John, who by inspiration described events "in the Lord's day," envisioned the above—in effect, an angel overseeing the global spread of the Kingdom message by us.—Rev. 1:10. *w 2/1 4, 5*

Sunday, January 22

Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one, with your dignity and your splendor. And in your splendor go on to success.—Ps. 45:3, 4.

The time draws ever nearer when Jehovah will signal his chosen King to engage the enemy in a final war. How marvelous it is to see the fulfillment of dramatic situations recorded in the Scriptures now taking place! (1 Chron. 12:22-38) In our day, the anointed were the first to accept Jesus Christ as their King. Then, particularly since 1935, a "great crowd" have recognized the true source of success and blessing and have flocked together. They have joined themselves to the modern spiritual Israelites, ready to share in the sufferings and hardships of open spiritual war with Satan's entire organization—to the honor and glory of Jehovah. Clearly, then, the days are urgent. May the enemy never catch us unawares in the approaching critical stage of our sacred service. May we continue boldly sounding out the battle call because Jehovah assures us of the victory! *w 3/1 17-19*

Monday, January 23

Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?
—Matt. 24:3.

The facts prove that Jesus' prophetic words at Matthew 24:4-14 have a larger, a major, fulfillment at the present time. Revelation chapter 6, written decades after Jerusalem's tribulation, also foretold war, famine and sickness. This would involve far more than Judea, for Revelation said that the war would "take peace away from the earth." (Rev. 6:4) Global de-

velopments since World War I in 1914 to 1918 show that we are living in the conclusion of the present wicked system of things, which will climax in a "great tribulation," eliminating wickedness from the earth and making way for a Paradise under the rule of God's Kingdom. (Matt. 24:21) The evidence shows that Christ has received kingship and acted against God's enemies in heaven. Christ has turned his attention to the inhabited earth, being invisibly present. So we will soon face the removal of God's enemies. *w 2/15 4-6*

Tuesday, January 24

This is what I continue praying, that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment; that you may make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others up to the day of Christ.—Phil. 1:9, 10.

By reason of our repentance, conversion and faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we have been made clean in God's sight. We must preserve this condition if we want to continue in God's favor. More than that, we must keep clean so as to be able to appeal to all lovers of truth and righteousness who are distressed because of the wicked, unclean conditions they see upon the earth. (Ezek. 9:4) Furthermore, it is absolutely imperative that we stay holy and clean so as not to stumble any of our fellow believers. That is why the apostle Paul reminded the Christians in Philippi as above. But, sad to say, some of our former associates have failed to keep themselves clean, holy, as bearers of Jehovah's utensils. *w 5/1 6, 7b*

Wednesday, January 25

I am hoping to see you directly, and we shall speak face to face. May you have peace. The friends send you their greetings.—3 John 14.

John referred to his beloved fellow believers as "the friends" in a way that Jehovah's Witnesses often do today. (Compare John 15:13, 14.) Surely, the second and third inspired letters of John impress modern-day Christians with the need to love one another, reject apostasy, cling to the truth and promote the interests of true worship. Hence, we as Jehovah's Witnesses, are determined to remain loyal to Scriptural truth as we sing our Father's praises, declare the good news of the Kingdom and point to Christ Jesus' vital role in God's arrangement for blessing mankind. As Jehovah's Witnesses, we face many tests of faith in these critical last days. But John's sound counsel will help us to continue walking in the truth. May we, therefore, imitate what is good, do all we can to promote Kingdom interests and go on serving together loyally as fellow workers in the truth, all to the praise of the marvelous God of truth, Jehovah. *w* 4/1 22-24a

Thursday, January 26

The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.—Rom. 8:21.

Think what you could do in a righteous New Order of peace and prosperity with a perfect mind and body—and never dying! Think of exploring and enjoying the majestic mountains, the refreshing forests, the flower-decked fields and gardens, the fascinating animal life, the sparkling streams

and lakes free from pollution, the delicious foods of different peoples. Consider the talents that men and women will develop in craftsmanship, architecture, landscaping, home decorating, artistry and music. Without a doubt, mankind will be stimulated to new heights of expression and beauty. Think, too, of getting better acquainted with the One who makes all of that possible, Jehovah God. Increased knowledge of his awesome universe with its galaxies, stars and planets will also prove fascinating. Yes, indeed, the above words will be proved true. *w* 4/15 13a

Friday, January 27

You have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels, in general assembly, and the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens.

—Heb. 12:22, 23.

In the context of this scripture Paul magnifies God as "the Judge of all," who declares these "firstborn sons" righteous or just, that they may be taken into the new covenant that Jesus mediated by means of his own precious blood. And Paul mentions also "the spiritual lives of these righteous ones," the Kingdom heirs, who now walk in "a newness of life." (Rom. 6:4; 8:16) The "heavenly Jerusalem" mentioned above refers to the Messianic Kingdom to which anointed Christians "have approached," even as can be seen by the following verses, 28 and 29. That Kingdom has come—in the year 1914! How earnest we all should be in "seeking first the kingdom" and in always offering to Jehovah "a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name!"—Matt. 6:33; Heb. 13:15. *w* 3/15 4, 5a

Saturday, January 28

He went forth conquering and to complete his conquest.

—Rev. 6:2.

The crowned rider on the white horse will not stop short of attaining his goal. So yet onward he must ride. Two world wars are already past history, but war preparations on a prodigious scale still shake the peace of mankind. Who, now, will accept the honorable privilege of giving the final part of the earth-wide witness concerning the established Kingdom of God by Christ? The united witnesses of Jehovah all around the globe answer, "We shall!" May Jehovah aid them in doing so, to the vindication of him as the Universal Sovereign! We have seen the fulfillment of Revelation 6:1-8. What all of this, as happening since the close of the Gentile Times in 1914, has signified is thrilling, aye, glorious! At this late date what we are approaching is the end of the conclusion of the system of things that came into existence since the Flood of Noah's days. This is, for a fact, good news. *w* 5/15 13-15a

Sunday, January 29

Go, preach.—Matt. 10:7.

Our modern history shows that we have fully restored the clear ring of the Kingdom good news. In obedience to Christ's command we are busy in the most extensive evangelizing work ever. Global witnessing must be done before the end of this system comes. (Matt. 24:14) For the past 100 years this has been the focus of Jehovah's Witnesses. As a result our evangelizing work has caught the attention of the world. Annually hundreds of millions of hours are spent and hundreds

of millions of pieces of literature are placed with the people. All of this has been accomplished by a relatively small number of people. Do we attribute this amazing record to our own intellectual skills and strength? No. All credit belongs to our wise and powerful God, Jehovah, the first Evangelizer. So, if we see evangelism's place in true worship and sincerely desire to please Jehovah, then regularly, week by week, we will evangelize, or as Jesus said, "Go, preach"! *w* 2/1 17-19

Monday, January 30

Stand firm against the machinations of the Devil.—Eph. 6:11.

Jesus foretold regarding his followers: "People will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you." (Matt. 24:9) However, such frontal approaches often boomerang, resulting in God's persecuted servants' having even greater zeal for service. (Acts 5:41, 42) Therefore, Satan more often tries other methods—*subtle designs*—to break the integrity of God's servants. The Bible points to such subtle designs when it encourages as above. The Greek word here for "machinations" means "crafty acts." That Satan is a master of deception, being extremely crafty and cunning, is also indicated when the Bible says: "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light." (2 Cor. 11:14) Consider his first successful machination. When approaching Eve he made the fruit seem extremely desirable, telling her that eating it would improve her situation. Eve yielded to Satan's enticement. She cultivated wrong desire, which led to her sin. *w* 1/15 7-9

Tuesday, January 31

[May God] grant us . . . the privilege of fearlessly rendering sacred service to him . . . all our days.—Luke 1:74, 75.

Jehovah permits persecution in order to test the loyalty of those who have made a dedication to him. He has brought together spirit-anointed ones so that they might declare abroad his excellencies. God is also 'rocking all the nations' so that "the desirable things of all the nations"—people having divine approval—might be brought into his "house" and

fill it with glory. (Hag. 2:7) Accordingly, persons with a heavenly hope and others who look forward to eternal life on a Paradise earth have become dedicated Christians and witnesses of Jehovah. But who among all these will finally be part of the promised "new heaven" and "new earth"? (Rev. 21:1) Not everyone among them will be. There will be no lasting place for those proving unfaithful. Hence God permits persecution to sift out from among his people those who are disloyal. May we always be among those able to say the above. *w 5/1 12, 13*

Wednesday, February 1

As for me, in my integrity I shall walk.—Ps. 26:11.

Pleasing Jehovah and glorifying him especially will contribute to our happiness when persecuted as Kingdom supporters. Even when under extreme duress, 'walking so as to please God' is vital to our continued joy as Jehovah's servants. (1 Thess. 4:1) Furthermore, when suffering as a Christian, we should "confess that name to the honour of God." Think of it! Besides pleasing Jehovah, when we endure persecution faithfully we "keep on glorifying God." (1 Pet. 4:16, *The New English Bible; New World Translation*) What a joyous incentive to endure persecution courageously! Clearly, then, Jehovah's Witnesses have sound reasons to be happy though persecuted. Therefore, let us be as resolute as the psalmist David, even as noted by the words above. As faithful Christians, we can be happy though persecuted because we know the Devil's aim in bringing such persecution upon us. We also realize why Jehovah God permits his people to be persecuted. *w 5/1 17-19*

Thursday, February 2

Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Statute-giver, Jehovah is our King.—Isa. 33:22.

Jehovah has standards, even as a human father may have values and requirements as to behavior at home and in dealing with others. Jehovah, the universal Judge, Statute-Giver and King, provides in the Bible laws, rules or clearly stated principles that indicate his moral standards and what he expects of humans—guidelines on how we should walk. Who among us would deny the value of Jehovah's standards? Yet we might chafe at them when they conflict with some personal desire. We might minimize or take exception to his standards, feeling that our situation is an exception or demands a bending of the rules. Following six creative days, God declared his work to be "very good." (Gen. 1:31) Everything had been created in logical order, and in doing so he consulted no one. Obviously he contained within himself the knowledge and wisdom to do it all. Surely such wisdom inspires in us confidence as to his requirements for us. *w 6/15 3-5*

Friday, February 3

A man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh.—Gen. 2:24.

As the closest of all human relationships marriage unites two differing personalities—a delicate task indeed! For such a union to work, each must talk honestly with the other and bare his or her feelings. What hinders such personal communication? Some are reticent, shy about expressing themselves. Still others become more interested in things than in their marriage. Clinging too tightly to parents can also inhibit closeness. Certainly, others should respect a married couple's need for privacy and not take undue liberties nor seek the attention that should rightly go to the mate. (Prov. 25:17) Then again, a wife may confide in her mate, but her feelings may be disregarded or belittled, perhaps even used against her on another occasion. Such would indeed be a barrier to communication. *w 6/1 4-6*

Saturday, February 4

The dragon . . . went off to wage war with the remaining ones of her seed, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus.—Rev. 12:17.

Prophetic truth reveals to our eyes of faith that, since the fall of the year 1914, Christ Jesus has been appointed by Jehovah as Field Marshal of the heavenly hosts of warrior angels. Swiftly he led these forces against the Devil and his angels, sweeping the heavens clear of their polluting presence and cornering them in the vicinity of the earth. And now, while awaiting

the final signal from Jehovah to destroy the enemy, Christ Jesus conducts a visible earth-wide activity that also involves warfare. (Rev. 12:7-9) Satan and his demon hordes, realizing their time is short, wrathfully wage war with the remaining ones of Christ's anointed followers. Why? Because they are proclaiming the Kingdom of God. It follows that those associated with them, the "great crowd" of "other sheep," likewise become targets of this vicious warfare. *w 3/1 3, 4*

Sunday, February 5

Keep on exhorting one another each day, as long as it may be called "Today," for fear any one of you should become hardened by the deceptive power of sin.—Heb. 3:13.

Paul based his comment on a quotation from Psalm 95:7-11. The Israelites had hardened their hearts during the days of Moses. After hearing the report of Joshua and Caleb about the Promised Land, they manifested lack of faith. Even though they there could enjoy peace and blessings during God's ongoing rest day, the Israelites, with hardened hearts and unbelief, refused to move into the land and live there. God's great Sabbath Day continues. We Christians can now enter or remain in that rest. How? By exercising faith in our leader Jesus. We also need to cease from works of unbelief, such as those manifested by people who do not truly believe that a New Order will ever come. Their lives center on recreation or pleasures. If we do have faith in what lies ahead for God's people, we will show it by our activities. *w 2/15 17-20a*

Monday, February 6

Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness.
—Matt. 6:33.

In view of the prevalence of materialism we should often examine our own Christian activity, asking: "Do I study the Bible as regularly as I once did? Is my meeting attendance as regular as it was in the past? Do I put in as much time in the field ministry as formerly?" Perhaps you say: "Oh, I am much busier now." But could it be that you are spending more time in the pursuit of pleasures, perhaps in front of a television? Is it that you are accumulating material things and taking care of them is hindering you rather than helping you in your service to God? Are you really heeding Jesus' counsel not to be anxious about material things but to seek God's Kingdom first? We see many battle casualties—Christians who have been taken in by the Devil's subtle forms of materialism and have fallen out of God's service. So "keep your senses, be watchful."
—1 Pet. 5:8. *w 1/15 15, 16*

Tuesday, February 7

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.
—1 Cor. 3:19.

There are historical examples to show that not only were God's servants viewed as foolish by people of the world but the wisdom of the world was also foolishness to God. Take Noah, who took on a foolish task from man's viewpoint but not from God's. Imagine building on dry land a colossal boxlike structure for floating on water. That seemingly speculative endeavor brought ridicule from the people. Yet, the fact is that it was

their way of life, their way of doing things, that amounted to foolishness to God. Would you, in order to please God, give up wealth and nobility, accepting instead ill-treatment? Moses did. Surely his course of action seemed to be foolish to the Egyptian world, but the world's wisdom was shown up to be foolishness when Egypt's wise men were humiliated by Ten Plagues and that nation's military might was destroyed in the Red Sea. Truly, the wisdom of men is no match for the wisdom and power of God.
w 2/1 5-7a

Wednesday, February 8

Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.
—Phil. 4:6, 7.

Even as bad associations can make us unclean, so good associations will help us to keep spiritually clean. (1 Cor. 15:33) Nor may we overlook the help we get from prayer. We are counseled to "persevere in prayer," to "pray incessantly." (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17) Never should we be too busy for prayer. Let us pray for wisdom, for strength, for God's holy spirit. Then, by working at what we pray for, we will enjoy the "peace of God" that will enable us to stay holy and clean. Talking to others about God's Kingdom, staying busy in Jehovah's service, is another great aid in keeping clean. Not a few who have become involved in bad conduct have done so while relaxing, as when on a vacation.
w 5/1 16-18b

Thursday, February 9

Let the thief steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need.—Eph. 4:28.

God's standards have truly proved to be practical in economic matters. (Col. 3:23; compare Luke 16:10-12.) Reports from around the earth show that many of Jehovah's Witnesses have kept their jobs when others were laid off, or have even been promoted because of being honest and diligent. Of course, if a person is employed he has less difficulty during hard times. Financial benefits come also from a person's avoiding unscriptural habits and addictions. God's standards help us in ever so many other ways. In marriage they encourage love, respect and unity at a time when moral laxity and calls for liberation are leading to high divorce rates. Jehovah's standards help Christian children to accept parental direction, not being quick to rebel as is the case with many of their schoolmates.
w 6/15 16, 19

Friday, February 10

Better is a revealed reproof than a concealed love.
—Prov. 27:5.

What if your mate does something or allows something that pains you and that could even damage your marriage? How can you communicate during such times? Furnishing helpful insight into such a matter is the episode in the life of Abraham and Sarah recorded at Genesis 21:8-14. Many problems today can put a strain on your marriage. For instance, you may feel that your mate is giv-

ing undue attention to another person. Research studies, along with countless actual experiences, show that if a husband or a wife gives too much attention to a personal friend, especially of the opposite sex, it causes considerable marital strain. Or possibly your mate cherishes a job or a hobby that is having a detrimental effect on your marriage. Do you, like Sarah, discuss such delicate matters and perhaps prevent further damage? And if your mate did bring up something that pained your heart, would you respond like Abraham? *w 6/1 11-15*

Saturday, February 11

Look! the man clothed with the linen, at whose hips there was the inkhorn, was bringing back word, saying: "I have done just as you have commanded me."
—Ezek. 9:11.

As they give wholehearted support to the Kingdom issue, Jehovah's Witnesses make written reports of their month-by-month service. In this, they are like the man with the secretary's inkhorn, described at Ezekiel 9:1-11, who is commissioned to mark people for survival and who faithfully reports back to Jehovah, even as noted above. How satisfying it can be at Service Meetings to hear details of a fine total report by the congregation and to know that your report, even though it may have been a mere "widow's mite," contributed toward that result! Also, as we each year examine the grand total of activity in the annual worldwide report of Jehovah's Witnesses, it can be thrilling to reflect on the fact that our own reports, however small, are yet a part of that tremendous global record! —Mark 12:42, *Authorized Version. w 1/1 4a*

Sunday, February 12

Go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."—Matt. 10:7.

Yes, Jesus not only requested God to send more workers into the harvest but he himself began fulfilling such a request by ordering his apostles as above. (Matt. 9:37, 38) Preach to people, was his cry. To soothe troubled mankind, human wisdom might have dictated the setting up of a bureaucratic social program; but Christ expressed God's wisdom. It was simply: "Go, preach." After giving these instructions, Jesus spoke to others and told them to evangelize too. When these preachers returned with a report of success, Jesus was overjoyed and praised his Father because He had 'hidden these things from wise and intellectual ones, and had revealed them to babes.' (Luke 10:21) Those "babes" were Christ's grown disciples, and evangelism was their tool to uncover the truth of God to others. Truly it was divine wisdom and power as expressed by Kingdom preaching that established true Christianity. *w 2/1 7, 8*

Monday, February 13

Holy brothers, . . . consider the apostle and high priest whom we confess—Jesus.—Heb. 3:1.

Because of the distorted views some had of Jesus, Paul's above counsel was especially appropriate. Jews might have thought: 'This Jesus of Nazareth is merely a Galilean carpenter's son.' They even accused Jesus of being a demonized Samaritan. (John 8:48) Hence, God wisely encouraged Hebrew Christians to 'consider Jesus,' because a proper, balanced view of and relationship with Jesus

would help those Christians to be faithful. The divine counsel in Hebrews is also helpful to us because false or distorted views of Christ still abound. Many people today, rather than downgrading Jesus as did Jewish opposers, exaggerate his role. Their churches assert that Jesus is part of the Trinity and that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are equal, in contradiction to Psalm 83:18 and John 14:28. A balanced and accurate estimation of Jesus will be of immense value as we face the future. *w 2/15 7-9*

Tuesday, February 14

Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.

—1 Pet. 5:8.

In view of Satan's great anger because of having been cast out of heaven, this warning is especially appropriate now. (Rev. 12:12) That is why Peter also said: "Keep your senses, be watchful." But what is the Devil's purpose in subtly approaching us? It is not to cause our death immediately. In his wily approach against Jesus, Satan's purpose was to get him to compromise his worship of Jehovah. (Matt. 4:3-10) When his efforts to tempt Jesus to disobey God failed, Satan's aim was to cause him to seek relief from the threats of death by compromising his integrity to God. Similarly today, the real purpose of Satan's approach is to destroy our good relationship with God. Will he be successful? There is only one way that he can be, even as we read: "Jehovah is with you as long as you prove to be with him; . . . but if you leave him he will leave you."—2 Chron. 15:2. *w 1/15 3, 4*

Wednesday, February 15

If you do an act of worship before me, it will all be yours.

—Luke 4:7.

History records that the faithful early Christians refused to render a single "act of worship" that would have supported Satan's side of the great issue! Loyal followers of Christ refused to burn incense in honor of the Roman emperor, even though this cost them their lives. Some 20th-century Christians have been tested similarly. From the time of arrest and repeatedly throughout the internment of our brothers in Nazi concentration camps, efforts were made to force them to renounce Jehovah and refuse to have any further contact with his people. Being aware of Satan's purpose in causing us to be persecuted, may we never yield to any devilish temptation to sidestep an issue to avoid trouble. Let us not even entertain the mistaken idea that a seemingly minor compromise would quickly free us for the preaching work. Any compromising as regards our integrity can mean our total downfall. *w 5/1 8-10*

Thursday, February 16

[Keep] an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also . . . upon those of the others.—Phil. 2:4.

Because of being unjustly or unlovingly treated a wife might react by putting up a strong wall of reserve to avoid further emotional damage, as it were, becoming like a fortified "strong town." (Prov. 18:19) A war of pride might ensue, each refusing to back down. Such needless contentions can shut out personal communication and reconciliation as if the couple

were separated by the iron bars of a fortress! To improve communication one must maintain a "personal interest" in the concerns of one's mate. This requires taking time to talk about personal matters together. But more is needed than just talking. Attentive listening, rather than simply hearing, tells your mate: 'You are an important person to me. I want to know your thoughts and feelings, share your experiences.' Being a good listener is an art of the heart. It requires "fellow feeling."—1 Pet. 3:8. *w 6/1 6-8*

Friday, February 17

The showy display of one's means of life . . . originates with the world.—1 John 2:16.

A Christian might turn back to the beggarly elementary things over housing. In some areas private homes are very costly. Hence, many worldly people will buy a house for the image it creates, even if it means a crushing financial burden for them. Or materialistic people who do not have a growing family to accommodate might move from an average home to a larger one, and later to a still larger and grander one. (See Luke 17:28.) Thus, if a Christian were thinking of purchasing a home or moving to a larger one he should examine his motives and possible effects on his spirituality so that he would not be 'turning back to the elementary things' through a wrong motive. (Gal. 4:9) We certainly should resist any temptation to desire opulence that will impress others with our "means of life." Without judging others in such matters, let us individually keep putting God's service first in our lives. *w 6/15 13a*

Saturday, February 18

Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.—Matt. 5:3.

A very important matter to be considered in our Christian warfare is our having a clear vision of the gulf that separates God's clean organization from the permissive, immoral organizations of this world. Opposed armies in a war have to be able to distinguish clearly between friend and foe. We have been instructed as to the fruits of the spirit of God. We have been made aware of the works of the flesh. So there is really no gray area between God's organization and Satan's organization. Further, do we show by our course of action that we are regularly 'conscious of our spiritual need'? In carnal warfare it is essential that officers and other personnel have briefing sessions so as to be kept up-to-date on the movements on the battlefield and the latest enemy strategy. Likewise, our meetings are vital so that we may be regularly strengthened by the Word of God and his holy spirit. *w 3/1 12, 13*

Sunday, February 19

They all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak . . . about the magnificent things of God.—Acts 2:4, 11.

If preaching of Kingdom good news is the groundwork of Christianity, then all early Christians should have been evangelizers. Were they? Yes! answers secular history, even as does God's Word. Right from the moment that the Christian congregation came into existence in 33 C.E., it was an evangelistic organization. Its first membership of about 120 disciples wasted no time in becoming Kingdom preachers. Divine

history records as above. Please note that *all*, not just some, started to preach. Here was evidence of God's power and wisdom infusing those receptive worshippers with the amazing ability to witness in languages they had never learned in school. A miracle established the Christian congregation on the foundation of proclaiming the good news. Later that day Peter applied Joel's prophecy to the newly established Christian congregation, even as noted at Acts 2:17, 18. *w 2/1 9-11*

Monday, February 20

God . . . has . . . spoken to us by means of a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things.—Heb. 1:1, 2.

The book of Hebrews begins by focusing attention on Christ's superior position. He is now a glorified spirit, "the exact representation of [God's] very being." This does not mean that the Father and the Son are one god, for Jesus is spoken of as having 'sat down at the right hand of God.' (Heb. 1:3) Texts such as Hebrews 2:10 and 5:5, 8 also indicate that Jehovah is superior to the Son. Still, Christ now has "a name [position or reputation] more excellent than [the angels]." (Heb. 1:4) As the faithful angels do, we also need to recognize Christ's exalted position. The context of Hebrews 1:6 suggests that even the angels render homage to Jesus as God's chief representative and exalted Son. They appreciate that he has been "crowned with glory and honor" and given authority over the inhabited earth. This should cause us to pay more than the usual attention to what we have heard.—Heb. 2:1, 5, 9. *w 2/15 10-12*

Tuesday, February 21

Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.—Prov. 27:11.

When faced with temptations to commit sexual immorality, we should first consider how God is affected if we break his law. Jehovah urges us as above. Think about it: Will you break God's law and make Satan glad and God sad? (Ps. 78:38-41) If you really love Jehovah, how could you do such a thing? Consider, too, what is the wise thing to do. Only Jehovah can give you *everlasting life*. So is it not wise to do his will? (1 John 5:3; Rom. 6:23) Moreover, Christians who succumb to Satan's attack really lose their spiritual vision. Their lack of spiritual sight can be compared to the situation of Elisha's attendant, as recorded at 2 Kings 6:15-17. Do you see who is watching us? Jehovah is, and so are Christ and the angels. We are on a theatrical stage, as it were, so how could we, knowing that our very actions are being watched from above, engage in sexual immorality? *w 1/15 14, 15a*

Wednesday, February 22

Be vigilant with a view to prayers.—1 Pet. 4:7.

During persecution the need to pray constantly cannot be overstressed. Otherwise, we might think only about the suffering and might yield to a desire for relief by compromising our faith. Seek "the peace of God" when under duress. If we have prayed to Jehovah daily, we have established a fine pattern in life and should continue to approach him earnestly when persecuted. It is appropriate to pray for "the peace of

God that excels all thought." It will 'guard our hearts and mental powers by means of Christ Jesus'—down to death in faithfulness if necessary. (Phil. 4:6, 7) That this unsurpassed tranquillity can be ours when persecuted is suggested by the case of faithful Stephen, the first Christian martyr. He was strengthened by a vision of God's glory with Jesus at God's right hand. (Acts 7:52-56) Although Christians today do not expect to have such a vision, they can have God-given serenity as they meet persecution with endurance. *w 5/1 8-10a*

Thursday, February 23

Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it.—Eph. 5:25.

Since husbands have the Scriptural right to make the final decisions in the family, it would be easy for a husband to allow selfishness to creep in. Admittedly, most family decisions are matters where personal preferences play a large role. Do your own likes prevail when no Bible principle is involved? Note that a husband must imitate Jesus' *self-sacrificing* love. He delivered up himself for his disciples. "Christ did not please himself." (Rom. 15:3) Self-sacrifice means giving up some pleasure or going through some trouble or inconvenience for the benefit of another. Jesus' consuming interest was to help his disciples spiritually. While firm for righteousness, he was never harsh when his disciples expressed wrong views, or were arrogant, impulsive or cowardly. (Matt. 18:1-3; Luke 22:24-26, 47-51, 59-62) What a fine example he set for husbands! *w 6/1 3, 4a*

Friday, February 24

For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me.

—Phil. 4:13.

As Christian witnesses of Jehovah we have association of the best kind. Oh, our brothers and sisters may be imperfect and cause occasional irritation. On the whole, though, it is a real blessing to be among people who love God, who strive to apply Bible principles and who try to 'work what is good toward all, especially toward those related to them in the faith.' (Gal. 6:10) Another rich, powerful thing that we can delight in is having our Bible-based hope, whether that be immortality in the heavens or everlasting life on a Paradise earth. What sane person would abandon that? Finally, we may not overlook the assignment of work we now have from Jehovah and for which he has powerfully equipped us even as he did the apostle Paul. Disciple making takes effort, yes, but it also produces deep satisfaction and joy, for it helps others on the way to life. This activity can fill your mind and heart.

w 6/15 21, 22a

Saturday, February 25

Day by day people kept coming to David to help him, until it was a great camp, like the camp of God.—1 Chron. 12:22.

Following Saul's death the men of Judah were the first to recognize God's choice of David as their king. Evidently some Israelites decided in favor of the condemned house of Saul. Others decided on the basis of personal expediency. Still others remained indecisive. But sooner or later the choice had to be made, and happy were those who whole-

heartedly chose to support David's kingship! These were not selfish or taking the course of least resistance. They were not double-minded. Rather, their support for Jehovah's king led them to adopt an active role as David's subjects and soldiers. It was even as above indicated. From the details of the record we note that among these multitudes were those "having a knowledge of how to discern the times to know what Israel ought to do." (1 Chron. 12:32) These set a fine example for all Christian witnesses of Jehovah today. *w 3/1 6-8*

Sunday, February 26

The harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.—Matt. 9:37, 38.

Why was the early Christian congregation so bold and dynamic in its witnessing? Because Christ, as Founder, used God's wisdom and power to build upon himself a sturdy organization of evangelizers. Christ did this in two ways. First, he fulfilled his own assignment, and secondly, he personally trained his 12 close associates to preach and then he trained 70 others. (Isa. 61:1) Thus Christ established a solid core of preachers to carry on the evangelizing work after his death. (Matt. 10:5-42; Luke 10:1-16) Jesus got busy evangelizing because he knew people needed to hear the good news of God's Kingdom that will bring lasting peace to earth and remove all causes of distress. So after completing an evangelizing tour of cities and villages and observing the pitiful spiritual state of the populace, he said to his disciples the above. *w 2/1 6, 7*

Monday, February 27

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, never . . . say a greeting to him. For he that says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works.—2 John 10, 11.

Christians are to be hospitable, but not toward apostates from the true faith. The deceivers described above were traveling about and actively spreading false teaching. It would have been wrong for any dedicated Christian to allow these false teachers into his home. It would also have been improper to give the apostates any kind of greeting, whether it was welcome on their arrival or "God speed" at their departure. (Authorized Version) No loyal Christian would wish a deliberate promoter of false doctrine success in his work. Certainly, then, we would not socialize with such an individual. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) We would neither entertain such a deceptive teacher in our home nor greet a disfellowshipped or disassociated apostate. There would be grave accountability if a believer extended hospitality to an apostate and this resulted in the spiritual death of a fellow worshiper of Jehovah. *w 4/1 17, 18*

Tuesday, February 28

Neither let us practice fornication, as some of them committed fornication, only to fall, twenty-three thousand of them in one day.—1 Cor. 10:8.

The lure of sexual immorality has always been one of the Devil's foremost means of corrupting Jehovah's servants. Shortly before God's people of Israel were to enter the Promised Land, Satan used attractive Moabite women as bait to lure the Israelites away from Jehovah's service. Thousands of Israelites were hooked into

committing fornication, and, as a result, were put to death for their wrongdoing, serving as a warning to us even as noted above. This subtle design of Satan worked then, and it is working today. More people are disfellowshipped for sexual immorality than for all other reasons combined. But since we know that fornication and adultery are against God's laws, why do so many become involved in such activity? Well, because through Satan's propaganda channels fornication and adultery are made to appear exciting and pleasurable. *w 1/15 18, 19*

Wednesday, February 29

I shall certainly meditate on all your activity, and with your dealings I will concern myself.—Ps. 77:12.

Yes, meditation on Jehovah's Word, dealings and purposes. Even if deprived of a Bible and Scriptural publications, dwell on God's Word. Recall Bible verses and accounts, doing so throughout the day and during sleepless nights. Think about Jehovah's marvelous dealings with his persecuted or oppressed people of the past. Think, too, of the way Jehovah has supported his modern-day servants in communist prisons and the like. When persecuted, we can sense the support of God's "everlasting arms." (Deut. 33:27, AT) Remembering that suffering will end and will also help us to meet persecution with endurance. Therefore, during our sufferings we should look to the future, confident that our hardships will cease and faithfulness will result in rich blessings from our heavenly Father. And even though we may not get prompt relief, our suffering will not last forever. And we can endure it if we trust Jehovah completely. *w 5/1 11, 12a*

Thursday, March 1

Do not forget this: there will be terrible times in the last days.—2 Tim. 3:1, The New American Bible (Catholic).

Do you not agree that these are terrible times? The word "terrible" in this Bible text is from the Greek word *khalepos*. This is also translated "hard to deal with," "perilous," "dangerous," "grievous," "hard," and "very difficult." At Matthew 8:28 this same word is used in describing two demon-possessed men as being unusually "fierce" or "violent." How true it is that we now live in terrible and violent times! They fulfill this prophecy of Paul, showing that these unquestionably are "the last days." What has spawned these terrible times, "the last days"? Is it not the condition that Paul foretold, in saying: 'Men will be lovers of themselves, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride?' (2 Tim. 3:2-5) And such godless men are egged on by Satan the Devil. The result is the shocking state of affairs we see all around us. *w 7/15 1, 2*

Friday, March 2

After the three and a half days spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet. . . . And they heard a loud voice out of heaven say to them: "Come on up here."—Rev. 11:11, 12.

During World War I Jehovah's dedicated, baptized people became, spiritually speaking, as dead, notably as far as boldly preaching the Gospel, or good news, was concerned. They felt as though they had come to the end of their earthly career. But not so. Rather, as foretold above, a postwar call to action

was due to come to the spiritually dead remnant of Jehovah's dedicated people, to serve as his witnesses observable to the inhabitants of all the earth. In the first postwar year of 1919 such a call came to them, after they were awakened to the realization that Jehovah God had left them alive in the flesh upon earth for a vital purpose. They deeply appreciated that without his help they could not accomplish anything during their further sojourn amid a hostile world.—Isa. 26:18, 19. *w 7/1 4, 7, 8a*

Saturday, March 3

These, therefore, went their way . . . rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name.—Acts 5:41.

The Kingdom hope was specifically cited by Jesus as a reason to be happy though persecuted. (Matt. 5:10) As Jehovah's faithful Kingdom proclaimers, we are upholding his sovereignty and thus have added reason for happiness even amid tribulation. *A clear conscience* also contributes to the happiness of persecuted, though loyal, Kingdom proclaimers. Whereas a professing Christian is likely to experience shame and mental anguish if he suffers for wrongdoing, a person is rightly joyful if his suffering is for righteousness' sake as a faithful witness of Jehovah and as a follower of Jesus Christ. Thus, as noted above, after being flogged 'they went their way rejoicing.' (See also Acts 16:22-25.) Hence, while a witness of Jehovah should never conduct himself in such a way that he must be punished for wrongdoing, he can be happy if he is suffering for the sake of righteousness. *w 5/1 14-16*

Sunday, March 4

When you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers.—1 Thess. 2:13.

Genuine Christianity provides us with many powerful and rich things. Crucial to receiving many blessings is having a knowledge of the Scriptures. And we know that the Bible is truly 'the Word of God, which is also at work in us.' Yes, it has the power to change lives, to impart valid hope and to show us what the future holds. By reading it we can receive messages provided by the Creator and can learn just what his Son said and did. With the help of God's people, we have learned about Jehovah. (Rom. 11:33) Beyond knowledge, we have "the pattern of healthful words." (2 Tim. 1:13) Many have read the Bible for years but still do not get the sense of it. We, though, understand basically what it means. We can speak with understanding and assurance that eludes even theologians. *w 6/15 19, 20a*

Monday, March 5

Let marriage be honorable among all.—Heb. 13:4.

Since Jehovah God is the Author of marriage, it is capable of providing genuine satisfaction and joy. Yet many marriages—even some among dedicated Christians—are strained to the limit. Not without good reason, therefore, did the apostle Paul counsel as above. The word here used to describe marriage is also used to describe the "precious blood" of Christ at 1 Peter 1:19. According to one Greek lexicon the word means "held as of great price, precious . . .

especially dear." Because marriage brings "tribulation in [the] flesh," the challenge is in keeping your marriage honorable. (1 Cor. 7:28) But how can we do this? First, we must recognize one of the biggest problems, namely, lack of communication. In fact, experience has shown that breakdown of meaningful communication is one of the major causes for either divorce or "loveless marriages." But in view of Genesis 2:24, marriage should be the closest of all human relationships. *w 6/1 2-4*

Tuesday, March 6

I rejoice very much because I have found certain ones of your children walking in the truth, just as we received commandment from the Father.—2 John 4.

John had cause for great joy because "certain ones" were "walking in the truth." They had faith in the name of Jesus Christ, had love for one another and were striving to conform to the pattern furnished by God's Son. (Heb. 12:1-3; 1 John 3:23) If John was writing to a woman named Kyria, then some of her natural children were in the truth. But if he was using "children" and "chosen lady" figuratively, he could rejoice that some members of the congregation at that unrevealed location had resisted apostasy and were clinging to the truth and pursuing a life of faithfulness to Jehovah. (2 John 1) Indeed, loyal Christian witnesses of Jehovah have always considered adhering to the truth, or "walking in" it, to be their obligation. To them, this is their heavenly Father's commandment, the keeping of which they do not consider burdensome.—Compare 1 John 5:3. *w 4/1 9, 10*

Wednesday, March 7

Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. . . . They took no note until the flood came and swept them all away.

—Matt. 24:37, 39.

Revelation 6:4 tells us that to the rider on a fiery-colored horse it was granted to take peace away from the earth and that a great sword was given him—the sword of Total Warfare. That symbolic sword now embraces the most horrible and violent instruments ever devised and proliferated by man, including nuclear missiles capable by their combined power of blasting the entire human race off our globe many times over! If the presence of the giant Nephilim, combined with the abundant badness of man, in the days of Noah, was cause for Jehovah's 'bringing mankind to ruin because the earth was full of violence as a result of them,' with how much more reason should we expect the same Sovereign Lord of the universe "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth" today! (Gen. 6:4, 7, 13; Rev. 11:18) Speaking of the ungodly people of our age Jesus said the above. *w 7/15 10*

Thursday, March 8

But, by being carried away by . . . riches and pleasures of this life, they are completely choked and bring nothing to perfection.—Luke 8:14.

It could be that a person has an ulterior motive in giving, perhaps giving a gift to someone that is in a position to give him in return some privilege within the Christian congregation. That would indeed be wrong! And it would be wrong also for the one accepting the gift to repay it with that kind of favor.

If one did such a thing, it could be compared to taking a bribe. Wisely a Christian witness of Jehovah would guard against falling into such a trap, a trap that certain past servants of God fell into when entrusted with positions of responsibility. (1 Sam. 8:1-3; 2 Chron. 19:6, 7) Let us never forget, when material things become especially prominent or important in a person's life, regardless of the professed reason, that person is in a very dangerous situation. What can happen? Spirituality can, and often is, slowly choked, as noted above. *w 1/15 4, 5a*

Friday, March 9

O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad.—Ps. 97:10.

There is no question about these days being "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Making it even more difficult to stay clean are our own fleshly inclinations. (Gen. 8:21) Therefore, all of us must struggle to do what is right and to remain clean as bearers of Jehovah's utensils. (Rom. 7:13-25) But what will help us to stay holy and clean? Among the first things we must do to stay holy and clean as "lovers of Jehovah" is to "hate what is bad." Yes, we need to "abhor what is wicked." (Rom. 12:9) We must have strong feelings of aversion, of disgust, as to things that are bad, no matter how pleasurable they may momentarily be to our fallen flesh. We also need to keep telling ourselves that harm will come to us if we do not keep clean. (Gal. 6:7, 8) Moreover, we should bear in mind the harm that comes to others when we commit gross sins. Above all, we need to hate and avoid all that is bad so that we do not bring reproach upon Jehovah God. *w 5/1 11-13b*

Saturday, March 10

The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to . . . proclaim . . . the day of vengeance on the part of our God.—Isa. 61:1, 2.

As the book of Acts shows, any and all Christians were to be evangelizers. Men, women and even youths would have an active share in prophesying or proclaiming, speaking, bubbling up with God's message of good news. However, the message of God's Kingdom is not good news for everyone, for it includes a warning of destruction. The present corrupt system and all its supporters must go if the good news is to have any lasting benefit. Honest-hearted worshipers of Jehovah cannot transform this earth into a paradise if streaks of wickedness remain to stain its beauty. The Sponsor of the good news gave the command not only "to proclaim the year of goodwill" but also to declare "the day of vengeance on the part of our God." The angelic message at Revelation 14:7 similarly speaks of the arriving of 'the hour of judgment by God.' *w 2/1 11, 12*

Sunday, March 11

Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness.—Matt. 6:33.

An entire system of things is about to come to its finish. If we really want the truth and want to keep living, we need to demonstrate this to God and man. We must take in accurate knowledge of God's Word, assemble with his people and heed the words of Jesus above. As we do so, we will reap many benefits even now. Those who learn the truth and live by it

find enormous freedom mentally and emotionally, since they know why times are so bad and what the future holds. They are also freed from the futile way of life of people in this world who strive after material gain only, but who will lose it all when this system ends. There is tremendous relief, also, in being freed from religious error. If we have a love for the truth we will love the God of truth and we will love his visible organization. We will let nothing stop us from faithfully serving the God of truth who can set us free by his truth.—John 8:31, 32. *w 4/15 17-19a*

Monday, March 12

For all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.

Yes, many past events in Bible history have modern-day parallels that are helpful to us and give us proper direction in our lives. For example, take those events related to the ones who opposed the work of God and how such things affected Jehovah's servants back then. These events help to alert us, as Jehovah's people, to parallel occurrences in modern times and to what our responsibilities are in this area. (1 Cor. 10:11) Some 40 years before Jerusalem fell, God commissioned Jeremiah to speak publicly about injustices being done in Judah. Jehovah warned Jeremiah that some would oppose him, but that he would be with him and deliver him. (Jer. 1:19) What a great comfort this was to Jeremiah, strengthening him to carry out God's will for him! We can draw comfort from Jeremiah's experience. *w 3/1 1-3a*

Tuesday, March 13

There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing.

—Prov. 12:18.

Clearly, the need for personal communication does not give a license for thoughtless speech. Even if you are right and have the best of intentions, a thoughtless remark still "stabs." For good reason a capable wife is described as having "the law of loving-kindness" upon her tongue. (Prov. 31:26) When a man fails in some endeavor, how much he appreciates such a law on his wife's tongue! One Christian man was crushed because of a business loss. "At least you tried," said his considerate wife. "It's going to come out better next time." How his spirits soared! Especially is kindly speech needed during an argument. The sarcastic speech of a contentious wife can drive a husband away and make him prefer dwelling in a barren wilderness. Both husband and wife must consider how costly their words might be in terms of the other's self-esteem. *w 6/1 17, 18*

Wednesday, March 14

That is why it is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never drift away.—Heb. 2:1.

The Jews had long paid attention to God's Word, or Law, given through Moses. It is much more vital for us to pay attention to divine guidance provided through Jesus. Bearing this out, recall what Jesus Christ said about fleeing when Jerusalem was surrounded by encamped armies. (Luke 19:43, 44; 21:20-24) The Romans

surrounded rebellious Jerusalem in 66 C.E. but then mysteriously withdrew, whereupon Christians fled the city. Their paying attention to Jesus saved their lives when the Romans returned, bringing calamity in 70 C.E. Let us learn a lesson from this: With a world calamity just ahead, ask: 'Am I giving keen attention to Jesus' words? For example, does the amount of time I spend in recreation, my attitude toward my job or business, or my view of secular education indicate that I have given attention to Jesus' words at Luke 12:16-31?' *w 2/15 12, 13*

Thursday, March 15

Return evil for evil to no one. Provide fine things in the sight of all men. If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath.

—Rom. 12:17-19.

If someone has employment that involves carrying a weapon for use against other humans, or if he is required to be trained in the martial arts, such as judo and karate, what should he do? In making his personal decision he must bear in mind that a follower of Jesus is to pursue peace and so most Witnesses avoid such employment. Even though the employment may be for the purpose of protecting the public (or property) in harmony with Romans 13:4, experience has shown that there is always the danger of incurring bloodguilt by taking life with the weapon, with harm to the individual's conscience, as well as there being a danger of injury or death to oneself due to retaliation. Certainly it is best to avoid such dangers by selecting employment where they do not arise. *w 7/15 17a*

Friday, March 16

Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.

—Matt. 5:10.

Rumor had it that Emperor Nero was responsible for the burning of Rome (in 64 C.E.), and he sought to fasten the guilt on Jesus' followers. Thus was launched the first of various persecutions of Christians during the heyday of ancient Rome. How were those early Christians able to endure such brutal persecution? Indeed, how have past and present witnesses of Jehovah found it possible to be joyful while undergoing harassment or injury deliberately inflicted upon them with a view to stamping out their religious faith and belief? Yes, Jesus did say the above regarding their being persecuted. However, to be happy though persecuted, we must always bear in mind the Devil's aim in bringing persecution upon us, why Jehovah permits this tribulation, why we can be happy though persecuted, what we can do to prepare for the persecution and how it can be met with endurance. *w 5/1 1, 2*

Saturday, March 17

Proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God.—Isa. 61:2.

The precious name of Jehovah is indeed glorified by the marvelous record of service made by our brothers. While year after year we show increases we do not expect to convert the world. Rather, our divinely given commission is stated as above. However, it is our fervent hope and prayer that millions more of earth's teeming billions will respond to the Kingdom message before the "great tribulation" removes

all harmful, ruinous elements. Then, "the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea." (Matt. 24:21, 22; Isa. 11:9) In a number of lands Jehovah's Witnesses have to put up a hard fight for the faith under most difficult circumstances. As we reflect upon their faithful service, may we be determined, also, to overcome all obstacles in order to keep on serving Jehovah with our 'whole heart, soul, mind and strength,' as we lovingly help our neighbor to do likewise.—Mark 12:30. *w 1/1 5, 6, 13, 14a*

Sunday, March 18

Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil.

—Eph. 6:11.

In our fight to keep wicked spirits from cultivating in us materialistic inclinations, we need armor, spiritual armor. We need to have on "the breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS," which means we must do what is right in God's sight. (Eph. 6:13, 14) And the right thing for us to do now is 'to disown ourselves and follow Christ's example,' because "what benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16:24, 26) Another very important piece of armor is "the large shield of FAITH." (Eph. 6:16) We must genuinely believe in God's coming new system and not be looking to this old system to satisfy our desires. Never forget that soon it will end, along with all its riches. (1 John 2:17) But to fight against subtle forms of materialism, we especially need the next-mentioned piece of armor, namely, "the helmet of SALVATION."—Eph. 6:17. *w 1/15 1, 9, 10a*

Monday, March 19

Be like-minded, showing fellow feeling, . . . tenderly compassionate, humble in mind.

—1 Pet. 3:8.

For marriage mates to be good listeners requires what Peter calls "fellow feeling" (literally, "to suffer with") along with 'tender compassion' and 'humility.' So confide in each other. Share even trivial matters. Convert your feelings into words. Isaac and Rebekah had such closeness, as can be seen from the record at Genesis 27:46-28:5. The wife of Manoah noted her husband's anxiety and offered consoling words. (Judg. 13:22, 23) Elkanah was sensitive to his wife's feelings. After noticing his wife's depression he strove to 'draw up' the intentions of her heart by gentle questions. (1 Sam. 1:8) What about you? Are you quick to probe your mate's feelings? Do you let your mate feel free to express his or her feelings without being made to appear condemned? At times a sympathetic ear is needed rather than a pouring forth of advice.—Prov. 20:5; 21:13. *w 6/1 8-10*

Tuesday, March 20

So now I request you, lady, as a person writing you, not a new commandment, but one which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.—2 John 5.

The apostle asked the "lady" to observe the commandment "that we love one another." (Compare 1 John 3:11.) Expressing Jehovah's will for godly persons, Jesus had commanded his disciples to 'love one another, just as he loved them.' (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; John 10:14, 15; 13:34; 15:13) It had been binding on Christ's

followers "from the beginning" of their dedicated relationship with God—in fact, since Jesus first gave it and certainly from the inception of the Christian congregation at Pentecost of 33 C.E. In that sense, therefore, it was "not a new commandment," as John said. True worshipers gladly obey Jehovah because they love him with their whole heart, soul, strength and mind. (Luke 10:27) And Christians were to "go on walking in it," that is, continue to display love toward one another. —2 John 6. *w 4/1 9, 11, 12*

Wednesday, March 21

Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.—Luke 21:24.

To which "Jerusalem" does Jesus here refer? We recall that Jehovah established a theocratic kingdom at Jerusalem with David as king. It was to David that Jehovah there made the promise as recorded at Psalm 89:35-37. With the ending of the Gentile Times in 1914, the 'seed of David' with legal right was due to resume ruling in Jerusalem, or Zion, of which Jehovah says, at Psalm 2:6: "I, even I, have installed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain." This is the city David refers to at Psalm 110:1, 2. Yes, the Messianic King, Jesus Christ, is enthroned now in a heavenly Mount Zion, or Jerusalem, to rule in the midst of his enemies. Already he has hurled the arch-enemy, Satan the Devil, down to the vicinity of the earth. Knowing about these things, it is our obligation to sound the warning even as the early Christians did.—Acts 5:28, 41, 42; 4:16. *w 3/15 12, 14-17*

Thursday, March 22

Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword.

—Matt. 26:52.

Surely there could have been no stronger reason for using a sword than protecting the Son of God himself! Yet it was not God's will for Jesus to be spared at that time. So when the apostle Peter used his sword against the slave of the high priest, Jesus told him the above. Jesus thus made it plain that theocratic warfare from that time on was not to include the use of carnal weapons. This clearly was in line with what Jesus had told his disciples earlier on that same evening, that they would be persecuted because of being "no part of the world." It was in harmony with Jesus' prayer to his Father in which he emphasized that, like him himself, his disciples are "no part of the world." It agreed with what Jesus told Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews."—John 15:19, 20; 18:36. *w 7/15 13, 14*

Friday, March 23

Look! The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison that you may be fully put to the test.—Rev. 2:10.

Satan's aim in bringing pressure and persecution upon servants of Jehovah is to force them to compromise their faith. He wants to destroy the precious relationship we have with our heavenly Father. Why, at the very inception of sin, Jehovah God foretold enmity between the "serpent" and God's symbolic "woman," and between their respective 'seeds!' (Gen.

3:14, 15) Jesus unquestionably identified the serpent as Satan and told His persecutors that they were 'from their father the Devil,' hence, being of the Adversary's "seed." (John 8:31-59) In these last days the Devil's time is short and his anger is great indeed. So enmity between the 'seeds' goes on, and everyone on earth must line up eventually with either the godly seed or the devilish seed. Hence, if we are faithfully serving Jehovah God, we will be the objects of persecution. Satan the Devil will see to that. —2 Tim. 3:12. *w 5/1 4, 5*

Saturday, March 24

I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself.—Isa. 48:17.

God's moral standards cover all aspects of life, including family affairs, business dealings, conduct toward the opposite sex, attitude toward fellow Christians and participation in worship. At Isaiah 55:11 Jehovah said that "the word that goes forth from his mouth will have certain success." Just as surely, when we earnestly strive to apply his standards, we will have more success, accomplish more good and find more happiness. We can receive help from God's standards in many direct, physical ways. For example, there is a new disease that medical detectives are calling the century's most virulent epidemic, namely AIDS. Its two-year death rate is said to be over 65 percent. So far mostly homosexuals have contracted it. The facts show that God's standards regarding sexual morality, avoiding spiritism and 'abstaining from blood' help us keep free from this and other diseases.—Deut. 18:10-12; Prov. 5:18-23; Acts 15:29. *w 6/15 11-14*

Sunday, March 25

These were men of war, flocking together in battle line; with a complete heart they came to Hebron to make David king over all Israel.—1 Chron. 12:38.

How thrilling it now is to observe unfolding before our very eyes a modern-day antitype of that situation! The Greater David, Christ Jesus, has been chosen by Jehovah and is now ruling as heavenly King. Worldly nations are opposed to his kingship. They threaten to wipe out the King's subjects on earth. (Ps. 2:1-3) Therefore, all are being called upon to take their stand on one side of the issue or the other. That issue is: Are they for the Kingdom of Jehovah's Son or against it? Multitudes are indecisive. Others determine their position merely by what is expedient, only selfishly considering their own personal safety and gain. Multitudes are in danger of being dragged down to destruction. Hence, the urgent call is for all of Jehovah's people to rally to the side of the Greater David, armed and equipped to do battle with the enemy. *w 3/1 8-10*

Monday, March 26

*Flee from fornication.
—1 Cor. 6:18.*

One of the main ways wicked spirits inflict battle casualties is by getting Christians to engage in sexual immorality. They seek to corrupt our God-given sexual desire—meant to be satisfied only within marriage. The wicked spirits have succeeded in creating an environment wherein Christians are tempted into having sexual relations outside the marriage arrangement. Having on "the breastplate of righteousness" helps us

to fight this attack of wicked spirits. (Eph. 6:13, 14) We need to be determined to do what Jehovah says is right, seriously taking to heart Paul's words above. When the sex-mad wife of Potiphar kept begging Joseph day after day, "Lie down with me," he said: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" (Gen. 39:7-12) As did Joseph, we also need to think of the consequences of engaging in the immoral conduct that our 'treacherous heart' may desire. —Jer. 17:9. *w 1/15 12, 13a*

Tuesday, March 27

The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, and it is beauty on his part to pass over transgression.—Prov. 19:11.

What is needed when emotions become heated? Insight! (Prov. 16:23) Insight involves looking beyond the obvious. How does insight stop an argument? One husband walked in to find his wife throwing silverware across the room in a rage. What was bothering the wife was physical and emotional frustration. She felt trapped at home. Her husband had insight. Overlooking her unchristian outburst, he perceived her underlying frustration. His reaction? "I'm sorry, honey. I should have been in here helping you." Soon she calmed down. Do you show such insight? Do you look behind the words? Are you able to pass over such a personal transgression? Insight can also add persuasiveness to whatever request you may make of the other. Yes, a mate who is discreet, possessing insight, is a gift from Jehovah and contributes to a precious marriage. —Prov. 19:14. *w 6/1 19, 20*

Wednesday, March 28

God is your throne forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is the scepter of uprightness.—Heb. 1:8.

Here the apostle Paul quotes from Psalm 45:3-8 and applies the quotation to Jesus Christ, to call attention to his now highly exalted position. This makes it certain that the king mentioned in that psalm is the duly installed King Jesus Christ. The rider of the white horse described at Revelation 6:2 proves to be the same as the rider of the white horse portrayed at Revelation 19:11-16. In this latter reference his name is called "The Word of God," and on his thigh he wears the title "King of kings and Lord of lords." Here he is pictured as at the grand climax of his charge against his opponents, when he brings his ride to final victory on the battlefield of Har-Magedon. Blessed are our eyes to see by faith these things. Thrilled to our very souls at his conquests so far, we cry out, 'Ride on to your matchless victory at Har-Magedon, for the vindication of Jehovah God!' *w 5/15 21, 22*

Thursday, March 29

When being reviled, we bless; when being persecuted, we bear up.—1 Cor. 4:12.

To be able to do the above requires that we regularly read and study the Scriptures along with related Christian publications. Furthermore, essential to strong faith is association with fellow believers in Jehovah's worship and service. To prepare for persecution, we also need to go on "walking in the truth," living it daily, always being guided by the truth. (3 John 3, 4) By accepting God's guidance as we face smaller tests day after

day, we will build up our faith in Jehovah and in his ways. This, in turn, will motivate us to be guided by the truth when we are persecuted. Making it our custom to pray regularly to Jehovah will draw us closer to him, and this, too, will help us to prepare for persecution. The more we prayerfully rely on our heavenly Father, the more we will trust him. Our relationship with him thus will become too strong for foes, human or demon, to destroy.—Compare Psalm 9:1-6. *w 5/1 4-6a*

Friday, March 30

*Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword.
—Matt. 26:52.*

It is true that wars were fought by God's servants of ancient times. But we must remember that those were theocratic wars, commanded by God. Israel fought for the purpose of dispossessing depraved, demon-worshipping nations from God's "land." (Lev. 18:24-27; Deut. 7:1-6) Are the wars of the nations, and particularly wars fought for world domination since 1914, wars approved by God? When Catholics slaughter Catholics, Protestants slaughter Protestants, Buddhists slaughter Buddhists, or Muslims slaughter Muslims, are they acting in harmony with the God who "made out of one man every nation of men"? (Acts 17:26) How must Christ, the Prince of Peace, regard the bloodshed that erupted in Christendom when World Wars I and II got started? (Isa. 9:6) Let us note in the words above the new and higher standard that the Prince of Peace set for Christians just before he met a violent death. *w 7/15 11, 13*

Saturday, March 31

Go on telling them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."—Luke 10:9.

The kernel of the message of those doing the evangelizing work is the Kingdom, even as noted by the words of Jesus above. We should have this theme in mind, for our responsibility as evangelizers is to help our listeners understand how the Kingdom can be good news for them. So we should try to tailor-make, or personalize, the Kingdom message to fit their needs. Depending on our listeners' needs or interests,

Sunday, April 1

By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves.—Gen. 22:18.

Abraham had just proved that he was willing to sacrifice Isaac. In this episode we see a prefiguration of Jehovah's sacrificing his Son and then receiving him back by means of the resurrection. (John 3:16) Abraham prefigured Jehovah God, and Isaac—a young man who could have resisted his 125-year-old father—pictured Jesus Christ, who willingly laid down his human life as the ransom sacrifice. Because of Abraham's great faith, Jehovah had earlier made with him a covenant. (Gen. 12:7) Now, after having seen the tested quality of Abraham's faith, Jehovah repeated and enlarged upon this covenant promise. This fully expressed Abrahamic covenant supplied details as to the outworking of God's wonderful purposes. It showed that by means of the seed of deliverance promised in Eden all nations of the earth would get blessings for themselves. (Gen. 3:15) It is our privilege to make this good news known to others. *w* 8/15 2-5

we want to emphasize what the Kingdom will do that will be most appealing to them. For example, we may show them how the Kingdom will carry out God's purpose to make this earth a Paradise in which people will live forever, using such scriptures as Isaiah 45:18 and Psalm 37:29. How can we determine the listeners' needs? First, by being a good listener, willing to hear what *they* have to say. Ask questions and listen attentively to their replies, not being defensive if the responses are not what we expect. *w* 2/11, 12a

Monday, April 2

It was fitting for the one for whose sake all things are and through whom all things are, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Chief Agent of their salvation perfect through sufferings.—Heb. 2:10.

Jesus is first called 'the Chief Agent of salvation' in the case of anointed Christians who are his "brothers." (Heb. 2:11-17) But all who hope for life on a Paradise earth also depend on him for salvation. Paul wrote: "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered; and after he had been made perfect he became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him, because he has been specifically called by God a high priest." (Heb. 5:8-10) Of course, Jesus had been a perfect spirit, and on earth he was physically perfect. Still, in view of his role as our priest, Jesus had to be perfected in another sense. On earth he received training—education, disciplining and testing of his obedience even to death—to perfect him as a merciful and sympathetic high priest. Through him we can come to God in prayer. *w* 2/15 14

Tuesday, April 3

As in the daytime let us walk decently, not in revelries and drunken bouts, not in illicit intercourse and loose conduct, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not be planning ahead for the desires of the flesh.

—Rom. 13:13, 14.

Among the evidences of Jehovah God's helpful standards is that he condemns drunkenness. He even disapproves of 'giving oneself to a lot of wine.' (1 Tim. 3:3, 8) Many who ignore God's standard suffer diseases caused or aggravated by overdrinking. Ignoring Paul's advice to use only "a little wine," some Christians have got into a pattern of turning to heavy drinking to 'help them relax.' (1 Tim. 5:23) Gradually the habitual disorder of alcoholism (with physical, emotional and moral aspects) can develop. The resulting problems are many, including loss of respect, family strains (if not breakup), wasted income and loss of work. Are not God's standards regarding the use of alcohol a protection in this area? Surely they are. *w* 6/15 15

Wednesday, April 4

In this way husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies.—Eph. 5:28.

By means of the Word of God, and his example, Jesus aided his disciples in overcoming serious weaknesses so that they, as a group, would "be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:26, 27) Do you, as a husband, show such self-sacrificing love? Some men feel that providing for their wives materially is sufficient sacrifice. True, such labor is difficult and should be

deeply appreciated. Yet at the heart of Jesus' example was his tireless exertion in caring for the spiritual and emotional needs of his disciples in addition to the physical ones. After all the anxieties of the world in caring materially for their families, many men may understandably not want to be further taxed mentally at home. Self-sacrificing love is the answer. If your wife has a baffling problem, rather than put her off by a word or facial expression this love will motivate you to reason matters out with her patiently. *w* 6/1 4-6a

Thursday, April 5

Now I exhort you, brothers, to keep your eye on those who cause divisions and occasions for stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and avoid them.—Rom. 16:17.

What should be our position toward those who oppose and seek to undermine the faith we have received through the organization Jehovah is using? Jesus' counsel regarding opposers is: "Let them be. Blind guides is what they are." (Matt. 15:14) To quarrel with such ones, to debate and argue, is futile and really not the Christian course. No one is forced to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses. It is a privilege and a responsibility that we have undertaken of our own free will. (Ps. 110:3) If some do not want to be a part of the arrangement approved by Jehovah, and which he has blessed, that is a decision for such ones to make. Our aim should be to deal with opposers of the truth in a Christian way. However, there are certain things we should bear in mind. Paul wrote and advised as above. *w* 3/1 17, 18a

Friday, April 6

I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow.—1 Cor. 9:27.

We must consider the reflection it would have on the Christian congregation if we were to pursue an immoral course. Outsiders may conclude that Jehovah's Witnesses are not any different from the world, and, as a result, these observers may fail to respond to the life-giving message. (2 Pet. 2:2) Think, too, of the grief such an immoral course could cause your family members. And, if you are married, ask yourself: "How could I do such a cruel thing to my mate? What kind of person am I?" When we take everything into consideration, is not engaging in sexual immorality a completely selfish, shortsighted, foolish thing? True, it is not always easy to avoid wrongdoing. The apostle Paul himself had a lifelong battle against the wrong desires to which he had once been a slave and so he wrote as above. Paul 'got tough' with himself and so must we. *w 1/15 16, 17a*

Saturday, April 7

This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth.—Matt. 24:14.

The "sheep" of Jesus' parable will be the "flesh" that will be saved through the great tribulation. (Matt. 25:31-33; 24:21, 22) Thus, as the "great crowd," they will come out of that tribulation and enter into the cleansed earthly domain of the King Jesus Christ. (Rev. 7:9-14) From the start of the new system of things they will have a part in converting this Kingdom domain into the earthly Paradise worldwide that the Creator pur-

posed it to be in the beginning. (Gen. 1:27-31; 2:5-9) In the meantime, until they hear the invitation: "Come, . . . inherit the kingdom prepared for you," these righteous sheeplike ones continue working shoulder to shoulder with the remnant. (Matt. 25:34) Like the remnant they do not lose faith in the meaning of the end of the Gentile Times in 1914. They glorify their ministry by joyfully forging ahead, sharing in the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14. Are you having a full share therein? *w 8/1 18-20a*

Sunday, April 8

If you do look for Jehovah your God from there, you will also certainly find him, because you will inquire for him with all your heart and with all your soul.—Deut. 4:29.

Today, some of the "other sheep" have become complacent and, through lack of faith, have stopped serving Jehovah. They have cut themselves off from active association with his people. Some of them have got into sore straits, and the warnings contained in God's Word have 'found them out.' (Deut. 4:30) Should they feel irretrievably lost? No, even as noted above. As a united group of fruit-bearing branches, the remnant is very conscious of the vital need for some of the "other sheep" to awaken from complacency and to become once again fruit-bearing Christians. Yes, any who have become complacent and unproductive should heed the warning, respond to Jehovah's kindness and accept help so as to become fruitful Christians once again. Truly, all Christians must prove themselves to be Christ's disciples by bearing fruit.—John 15:8. *w 8/15 11-14a*

Monday, April 9

Another came forth, a fiery-colored horse; and to the one seated upon it there was granted to take peace away from the earth . . . ; and a great sword was given him.—Rev. 6:4.

There was an escalation of violence in the world before the Great Deluge—until God himself executed judgment. From the time of Noah's great-grandson Nimrod, the "mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah," there has again been an escalating of violence through the ages, perhaps gradual at first, but steadily gaining momentum. (Gen. 10:8, 9) There came in time the sword, the bow and arrow, the spear; and in modern times the musket, the cannon and other firearms. But World War I, starting in 1914, brought astonishing new weapons of violence—the airplane, the tank, and also poison gas. In that war, use of the submarine caused much terror and machine guns took literally millions of lives. The Lord Jesus Christ had foretold such a development in the Lord's day, where we have been since 1914. *w 7/15 9, 10*

Tuesday, April 10

Keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah.—Isa. 52:11.

The warning example of King David shows that we must be on guard at all times if we are to continue to heed these words. (2 Sam. 11:1-4) Self-control especially is vital if we want Jehovah God to keep on using us. (Gal. 5:22, 23; 1 Cor. 9:27) We must discipline our minds and guard our hearts, rejecting every temptation, deadening all inclinations to dwell

on unclean things. As Jesus put it, we must be willing to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand or a foot, figuratively speaking, if they tend to make us stumble. (Mark 9:43-48) Good counsel along these lines is given by Paul at Ephesians 4:29-5:5. In particular will love for Jehovah help us to keep clean. Are we really "lovers of Jehovah"? (Ps. 97:10) Do we appreciate all he has done for us? Is it our determination to walk with him, as did the faithful men of old? If so, loyal love for Jehovah will help us to keep holy, clean. *w 5/1 3, 18-20b*

Wednesday, April 11

The love the Christ has compels us . . . and he died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves.—2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

If the husband is self-sacrificing, will not the wife take advantage of it, always insisting on her own way? *That should not be the case!* Christian wives should respond as the congregation did to Jesus' self-sacrificing love, as noted above. Yes, there is need on her part to be unselfish. Just as a man can abuse his headship by selfishly dominating his wife, so, too, a wife can have an inordinate craving for the attention of her husband. (Gen. 3:16) Balance is not easy. With all the heavy demands on a Christian husband, including heavy congregational duties, there are bound to be times when he may not satisfy all of his wife's emotional needs. "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" confessed the psalmist. *None of us could!* (Ps. 130:3) Just as the husband will have an accounting with Jehovah, so will his wife. *w 6/1 19, 20a*

Thursday, April 12

Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you.—Matt. 5:44.

Every time a loyal witness of Jehovah meets persecution with endurance this adds to the humiliation of Satan, proving him to be a liar. Moreover, when a former persecutor becomes and remains a faithful persecuted witness of God and Christ, the Devil has experienced the disgrace of defeat. For instance, he certainly was not pleased when the former persecutor Saul of Tarsus became one of Jesus' persecuted followers who labored so diligently in spreading the good news despite persecution and many sufferings. (2 Cor. 11:23-27) How important it is, therefore, as shown by the above words of Jesus, that persecuted witnesses of Jehovah have the proper attitude toward their persecutors! Stephen was not filled with hatred for those who persecuted him. In fact, as they were stoning him he bent his knees and, just before falling asleep in death, "he cried out with a strong voice: 'Jehovah, do not charge this sin against them.'" —Acts 7:57-60. *w 5/1 16, 17a*

Friday, April 13

The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him. God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth.—John 4:23, 24.

Yes, Jehovah is looking for those who will worship him in this way. To meet with his approval, our worship must be consistent with what God has revealed about himself and his

purposes. We must also adhere to the entire body of Christian teaching emphasizing Jesus Christ. Continuing to walk in this truth is essential for salvation. (Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 John 3:23) Witnesses of Jehovah must continue to walk in the truth. In fact, they must cooperate fully in "sacred service" by loyally promoting Kingdom interests as "fellow workers in the truth." (Rom. 12:1; 3 John 5-8; Matt. 6:33) But how can this be done? Very helpful guidance on this appears in the teachings of Jesus, such as the words above. *w 4/1 1, 2a*

Saturday, April 14

God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put the wise men to shame; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put the strong things to shame; . . . in order that no flesh might boast in the sight of God.

—1 Cor. 1:27, 29.

Really, it is up to each one of us to answer the question: Am I one whom God would choose? His choice is not based on intellectual ability or worldly position. The key, rather, is willingness to do God's work in his way, even when by so doing we are considered foolish or weak by the world. Jesus Christ set the example. He was willing to be considered a fool by his contemporaries in order to become to those whom he disciplined "wisdom from God." (1 Cor. 1:30) If we are willing to proclaim the Kingdom message, considered foolishness by the world, we are putting ourselves in line to be used by Jehovah God as one of his Witnesses and to enjoy the blessed gift of everlasting life in his righteous new system. *w 2/1 4, 19a*

Sunday, April 15

Memorial Date After Sundown

Look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfector of our faith, Jesus.—Heb. 12:2.

Why is it vital that we heed these words during this time of the end? Because Jesus' birth, earthly ministry, sacrificial death, resurrection and priestly service in heaven bring to perfection all the prophecies, types and patterns concerning the Mosaic Law. While Paul could recognize Christ as the "Perfector of our faith," we have added reason to do so today. We see the major fulfillment of Jesus' words about the 'sign of his presence and the conclusion of the system of things.' (Matt. 24:3) So our faith has a more solid basis. Salvation into "the inhabited earth to come" is also so much closer than it was in Paul's day. Let us, then, continue to consider Jesus, the Perfector of our faith, confident that God "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him" in faith. (Heb. 2:5; 11:6) In obedience to his command, as recorded at Luke 22:19, we will meet this evening to commemorate his death. *w 2/15 19-21*

Monday, April 16

O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!

—Rom. 11:33.

Non-Jewish Christians who had been grafted contrary to nature into the Abrahamic-covenant tree as part of the spiritual seed had no reason to feel superior to the Jews. Paul explained: "They also [Jews], if they do not remain in their lack of faith, will be grafted in." (Rom. 11:23) A small remnant of natural Jews accepted the primary Seed and became permanent branches in the symbolic tree. But the majority of

the Jews had been broken off the Abrahamic-covenant tree in 36 C.E., at the end of the 70th week of years. (Dan. 9:27) After that, however, some Jews had been grafted back into their own olive tree by putting faith in the Messiah, Jesus, the primary Seed of Abraham. By pointing these things out Paul promoted unity among the anointed Christians, for all had become 'sharers in the olive's root of fatness' through "God's kindness." The manner in which Jehovah has done all this should truly fill us with wonder.—Rom. 11:17, 22, 33-36. *w 8/15 18, 20*

Tuesday, April 17

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
—Isa. 55:9.

When we compare God's accomplishments with what man has done, as seen by the condition the world is in, clearly, God was not exaggerating when he said the above words. Is it not fitting, then, that rather than relying on human views as to what standards should be met, we should be interested in Jehovah's directions? Material creation confirms that God is "perfect [in all] his activity." Yet Deuteronomy 32:4 goes on to mention Jehovah's moral attributes. In view of his accomplishments and standards in the physical realm should we not look to him with confidence as to his moral standards? The fact is that he has provided excellent moral standards by which we can guide our relations with him and with fellow humans. And he does not limit his counsel to a narrow aspect of our life, such as certain doctrinal beliefs. His moral standards cover all aspects of life. *w 6/15 9-11*

Wednesday, April 18

Seek peace and pursue it.
—1 Pet. 3:11.

How may we follow through on this advice, surrounded as we are by a world of violence? Peter answers, telling us to "turn away from what is bad and do what is good." We need, then, to put forth earnest effort to come into a peaceful relationship with Jehovah God on the basis of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Thereafter we pursue peace by following closely the standards set forth in his Word. "For the eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication; but the face of Jehovah is against those doing bad things." (1 Pet. 3:12) When the wicked try to do bad things to us, we can earnestly supplicate Jehovah. We can call aloud to him by name for help, as when confronted by a rapist or other evildoer. In violent situations implicit trust in Jehovah has often been the key to survival. Time and again, the witness of Jehovah has been blessed in holding to the confidence expressed at Psalm 18:46, 48. *w 7/15 1, 2a*

Thursday, April 19

The desire of the eyes . . . originates with the world.
—1 John 2:16.

This text calls to mind Satan's original approach to Eve, how he drew attention to the innocent-looking tree with its forbidden fruit. Having had her interest in the tree and its fruit aroused, Eve began to notice "that it was something to be longed for to the eyes, yes, the tree was desirable to look upon." So what happened? "She began taking of its fruit and eating it." (Gen. 3:6) Wicked spirits

will use similar tactics, playing on our natural desire for nice-looking things. They are no doubt responsible for the rationalizing that is sometimes heard: 'Well, if I have to work for a living I might as well make a lot of money and get many things. That way I can share them with others.' Surely it is commendable for Witnesses with more in a material way to share with those having less. However, if giving generously requires working overtime and neglecting spiritual interests, then such reasoning would not be sound. *w 1/15 3, 4a*

Friday, April 20

Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.—1 Cor. 10:12.

Because of not keeping themselves clean as bearers of Jehovah's utensils some have been expelled from the Christian congregation. (Isa. 52:11) Others have been reproved for failing to live by other Bible principles. Included among all such have been quite a few children of ordained ministers, as well as some overseers and ministerial servants. Evidently, to an extent, all of these fell into a snare of Satan. By trying to bear Jehovah's utensils while not keeping themselves spiritually clean, they were ignoring the command at Isaiah 52:11, and this they could not continue to do with impunity. (Compare Job 9:1-4.) How this underscores the importance of the warning of the apostle Paul above! Why does keeping spiritually clean present such a challenge? Because we have arrayed against us three powerful foes—Satan and his demons, his visible organization and our sinful fleshly weaknesses. *w 5/1 7-9b*

Saturday, April 21

All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

If we really want the truth about all the important issues of life and the answers to questions that perplex even world leaders, God has them, for he is "the God of truth." (Ps. 31:5) Since it is impossible for him to lie, what he says is what will be. (Heb. 6:18; Isa. 14:24) God would certainly make his truths known to sincere seekers of truth, for, at John 8:32, Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." In prayer to God he also said: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) Where is God's "word," his truth, set forth? Paul answers as above. The Almighty Creator of the universe thus claims to have authored the Bible. By means of his powerful active force, or holy spirit, he moved faithful men to write down his thoughts. *w 4/15 16, 17*

Sunday, April 22

It is not you that bear the root, but the root bears you.
—Rom. 11:18.

Yes, to avoid being "lopped off," both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians would have to remain in God's kindness by preserving their unity as "one body in union with Christ." (Rom. 11:22; 12:3-5) Does this warning to anointed Christians contain a lesson for Christians today who are not spiritual Israelites? It most certainly does. Although they are not a part of the spiritual seed produced by the Abrahamic covenant, they

are definitely a part of the nations of earth who can bless themselves by means of the seed of Abraham. (Gen. 22:18) It follows that they must have faith like Abraham, whose life prospects also are earthly, and walk orderly in the footsteps of that faith. They must show their subjection to the Fine Shepherd, Christ. They must also cooperate with the remnant, becoming with them "one flock" under "one shepherd." (John 10:16) They too must be very careful to do nothing that might cause them to lose Jehovah's goodwill. *w 8/15 8, 9a*

Monday, April 23

Get out of her, my people.
—Rev. 18:4.

With the opening of postwar opportunities, it was no longer time for the remnant to mourn and to be like dead people. It was Jehovah's time to make them awaken to spiritual life and to cry out joyfully for being alive and in his service. (Psalm 126) Instead of being dry like dead bodies they were to have the moisture of life, as if being bathed with the abundant dew of the low, creeping mallow plant. The Greater Cyrus now reigned in the heavens, and it was Jehovah's time for them to be released from exile as in the death-dealing land of Babylonia. Their state of exile, like the land of Babylonia in which the Israelites of old were held in exile, was no longer to hold them back in deathlike impotence; it was time to let them loose for a spiritual rebirth, with courage and ability to get out of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. By prompt obedience they avoided being denounced by Jehovah. *w 7/1 11a*

Tuesday, April 24

Indeed, everyone to whom much was given, much will be demanded of him.—Luke 12:48.

No doubt many will agree that nothing demands so much of a man as does marriage, which might be said to be in line with the Bible principle of headship. Yet, when properly exercised, Christian headship can also create a homelife that is a haven of mutual love and respect where a husband's heart is at ease. However, his divinely appointed position as head does bring with it greater accountability, even as Jesus showed. Does this mean that a husband is solely responsible for the happiness in his home? No, both he and his wife must try to improve the atmosphere there. (Prov. 14:1) But just how is Christian headship to be exercised? This is a matter that all Christians—even the unmarried—need to understand. First in importance is love, even as we read: "Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it."—Eph. 5:25. *w 6/1 1-3a*

Wednesday, April 25

But we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever.—Mic. 4:5.

Are you now separate from this world and its violent ways, as were Jesus and his disciples in the first century? If so, you have come to share in a wonderful worldwide unity experienced only by Jehovah's Witnesses. It is a unity engendered by obedience to God's laws and his will for the present day. For now a "great crowd" of peace-loving Christians "out of

all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" is streaming toward Jehovah's great spiritual temple for worship. (Rev. 7:9, 10, 15) They are described at Isaiah 2:2-4. No flag-waving ultranationalists are these, but one peaceful, united people out of all nations. They are truly neutrals in a warring world. Micah 4:1-5 describes their spiritual prosperity and their prospect of living forever on earth in unity. It also tells that in contrast to the peoples of the world they will walk as noted above. *w 7/15 15, 16*

Thursday, April 26

The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up.—Gen. 8:21.

As long as the wicked spirits and the world under their control exist, we must fight to keep from coming under their influence. (Eph. 6:11, 12) Yet it is not only these outside attacks of wicked spirits with which we must contend; what makes our fight particularly hard is our inherited imperfection that resulted from the failure of Adam and Eve to resist the Devil's original efforts, just as noted above. Even the apostle Paul had to fight to do what was right, as can be seen from his words at Romans 7:21-23. "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate," the Bible says at Jeremiah 17:9. How clear it is that we need to be armed for the fight against the efforts of the wicked spirits to get us to do what is bad! We can be sure that the wicked spirits will try to cultivate in us materialistic inclinations. They will tempt us with things that are 'desirable to the eyes.'—1 John 2:16. *w 1/15 1-3a*

Friday, April 27

We have as high priest . . . one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin.—Heb. 4:15.

We must agree that, when under pressure, a clear conscience before God is of immeasurable value. (Heb. 10:19-22) In other ways, too, we can delight in having Jesus as a permanent high priest in heaven, for he is also a *sympathetic* high priest. You can imagine the decisions and problems that the Hebrew Christians faced in the patriotic environment of Jerusalem as they prepared to flee, leaving their homes, relatives and employment. Yet they were not entirely on their own in view of Paul's words above. How comforting that must have been to them, and it should be the same to us in the closing days of this system of things! With such a sympathetic high priest "we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time." (Heb. 4:16) No matter what trial arises, "he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test."—Heb. 2:17, 18. *w 2/15 17, 18*

Saturday, April 28

I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor governments nor things now here nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. 8:38, 39.

Our position toward opposers is distinctly marked out for us in God's Word. Always remember that we are not alone; we have the backing of Jehovah, Christ Jesus and all the holy angels. (Matt. 13:41, 42) We

also have the assurance of Jesus himself that he would be with his followers "all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:20) Hence, we need not become unduly disturbed when opposers rise up and fight against the truth. This is part of Satan's effort to halt the spread of the Kingdom good news. By remaining loyal and setting a fine example of godly devotion by our conduct and word, we will be assured of 'coming off victorious in all things through him that loved us.'—Rom. 8:37. *w 3/1 20a*

Sunday, April 29

Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving.—Matt. 10:11.

Jesus Christ displayed God's wisdom by both the example he set and the instructions he gave on how to do the evangelizing work. (John 8:28) He went right to the people with the Kingdom message. He taught them publicly and in their homes. Consider his instructions to his disciples, the 12 and the 70. These are to be found at Matthew 10:1-14 and Luke 10:1-12. Among other things, Jesus told them the above. Yes, find those who desire to listen. And then tell them: "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." (Matt. 10:7) Jesus even provided guidance on how to approach a householder, as noted at Luke 10:5, 6. And, they were to stay with the people who responded to the Kingdom message that they were preaching. But if the householder was not interested, then they were to move on. Simple instructions, yet specific enough to show evangelizers down to our day what to say and how to say it. *w 2/1 9, 10a*

Monday, April 30

We have a wrestling . . . against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.—Eph. 6:12.

Wicked spirit forces are especially intent on subverting and trapping Jehovah's Witnesses, who are striving to keep God's commands. That is why Paul warns as above. When having to contend with frontal attacks of ridicule, persecution and imprisonment, our spiritual fight is like open warfare. Whereas such direct attacks may cause us to stiffen our resistance, a sly, indirect approach may catch us off guard by appeal-

Tuesday, May 1

You yourself should select out of all the people capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit . . . and they must carry the load with you.—Ex. 18:21, 22.

Once the Israelites were out in the desert, free from their Egyptian captors, Moses' judicial responsibility toward the nation became overwhelming. His visiting father-in-law, Jethro, saw it so clearly that he offered the above practical suggestion that evidently had God's approval. This new judicial arrangement in Israel served to spread the load to other capable men. The congregation of Israel now had an organized body of elders qualified to handle judicial matters and disputes. The men who were to serve with Moses in administering justice to the nation were to be carefully sought out. It was not simply a matter of choosing men who were older in years. Moses was to "search" (Ex. 18:21, *The New English Bible*) for capable, qualified, incorruptible men. What a marvelous standard for those who care for the interests of Jehovah's people today! *w 9/1 4, 5*

ing to the weaknesses of the flesh. So we need always to be on the alert because quite often our fight must counteract subtle or unexpected approaches designed both to undermine gradually our efforts to follow godly principles and to destroy our relationship with Jehovah. Thus unbelieving relatives or doctors may have pressured you to compromise on the subject of blood transfusion. In the fight to maintain integrity you were willing to endure great stress. Why? Because the issue was clearly in focus.—Acts 15:28, 29. *w 8/15 5, 6b*

Wednesday, May 2

For the disclosure was made to me about you, . . . that dissensions exist among you.

—1 Cor. 1:11.

In the Revelation received by the apostle John about 96 C.E., he records a series of divinely inspired messages reflecting the spiritual conditions then prevailing within the Christian congregations and that could reoccur down through history. Two of these messages reveal the existence of apostate sects that were hated by Christ, the head of the true Christian congregation. Apparently, at least one of these sects tolerated idolatry and fornication. (Rev. 2:6, 14, 15) Several of the apostle Paul's letters, written much earlier, indicate that he already had to put up a hard fight against the tendency to form sects. In his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, Paul deplored their inclination to follow men, because it resulted in "dissensions" and "divisions." (1 Cor. 1:10) He expressed similar concern in his letters to the Galatians (1:6-9; 5:19-21), to Titus (3:9, 10) and to Timothy.—1 Tim. 1:3-7; 4:1-3; 6:20, 21. *w 9/15 6, 7*

Thursday, May 3

I have the strength for everything in him [Jehovah God] who invigorates me.

—Phil. 4:13, Byington.

When persecution actually does come upon us what can be done to meet it with endurance? *Strength from Jehovah* is vital! Like Paul, we need "power beyond what is normal," and we should pray for it. (2 Cor. 4:7-12) Then, with full dependence on our heavenly Father, we can be as confident as Paul was when he said the above. Even after our own physical strength has run out, Jehovah's resources will not be exhausted. He can and does impart power to his people. (Isa. 40:28-31) If we lean upon Jehovah, he will give us strength beyond our own capacity in times of stress. And let us not be fearful. Man can only go as far as taking our present life, but with Jehovah is the power to restore us to life by resurrection. And *prayer to Jehovah* is indispensable in meeting persecution with endurance. Jesus, who underwent many sufferings, always stayed close to his Father in heartfelt prayer.—Heb. 5:7. *w 5/17 7, 8a*

Friday, May 4

I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him.—Gen. 2:18.

True, a husband can set down various rules for the household. (Rom. 7:2) Yet his wife is not a child or a "second-class" person. Eve was to be on Adam's level of intelligence, his counterpart, really able to help him in carrying out his divine assignment. The capable wife described in Proverbs 31 was *trusted* by her husband. She purchased property, even planted a vineyard "from the fruitage of her

hands"—no small task! Was the husband resentful, feeling his headship was threatened? No, he praised her! (Verses 10, 11, 16, 28) A similar attitude can help a husband avoid needless arguments. Proverbs 13:10 warns: "By presumptuousness one only causes a struggle, but with those consulting together there is wisdom." A husband who is modest, aware of his limitations, rejoices with his wife's skills, thereby showing himself to be modest *at heart*.—Compare Proverbs 11:2. *w 6/11, 12a*

Saturday, May 5

The showy display of one's means of life . . . originates with the world.—1 John 2:16.

Some think that a "showy display" implies flaunting designer-name clothing or excessive jewelry, such as wearing four or five rings at the same time. And it may, for the Bible counsels against concentrating on adornments such as "gold ornaments." (1 Pet. 3:3) But a "showy display" can be made in other ways. A Christian might envy the life-style of people without hope who live for material things. In some lands people strive to get and then show off what locally are luxuries, such as a color television or a small automobile. Elsewhere people take pride in or intend to impress others with a new videotape recorder or luxury automobile. Will a Christian, who has "left all things and followed" Christ, develop an interest in showing off such things? We can ask ourselves: Do material possessions absorb more of my time and thoughts than when I 'heard the word, accepted it with joy' and put it to work in my life?—Matt. 19:27; 13:20-22. *w 6/15 11, 12a*

Sunday, May 6

Because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, . . . let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.—Heb. 12:1.

When commenting on showing faith under adversity, Paul urged us to consider how Jesus endured. (Heb. 12:2, 3) Then Paul reminded us that if severe persecution comes, we should view it as a form of profitable discipline. Of course, God is not causing the persecution; he is merely permitting it. Still, persecution can train us or help us to improve in needed Christian qualities, such as endurance, patience, loyalty and trust in Jehovah. Hebrews highlights imperfect men and women like us who endured through faith. (Heb. 11:35-40) The "cloud of witnesses" who have endured by faith have been added to in modern times. Hebrews says that the ancient examples of faith will be "made perfect." That will be in an earthly Paradise. So let us take to heart both ancient and modern examples of faith and be determined to "have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Heb. 10:39. *w* 2/15 8-10a

Monday, May 7

*I will appoint peace as your overseers and righteousness as your task assigners.
—Isa. 60:17.*

In order to face up to these violent days, we need the tender guidance of Jehovah's motherly organization. Since 1938 there has been an improved theocratic condition among God's people, as Jehovah had foretold. The peace and love of righteousness that now characterize Jehovah's organization worldwide have contributed much toward "the small one" of a few thou-

sand Kingdom proclaimers of 65 years ago becoming "a mighty nation" 2,501,722 strong, moving forward throughout 205 lands of the earth. Reports from the field show that, as we approach "the end," Jehovah is "speeding it up in its own time." (Isa. 60:18, 22; Matt. 24:14) In contrast, violence continues to escalate in such places as Lebanon. Yet our brothers there are strong. What has kept them strong? Implicit trust in Jehovah and determination to keep on associating in their meetings and other Christian activities. *w* 7/15 4, 5a

Tuesday, May 8

The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness, and they will pitch them into the fiery furnace.

—Matt. 13:41, 42.

Among the reasons for paying attention to yourself as an elder is the need to cultivate and maintain an intimate relationship with Jehovah God. Sadly some elders have neglected this relationship to the point of falling into such gross sins as adultery. How could this be possible? Simply because they have allowed Jehovah God and his promises to recede into the background. Their spiritual vision has become blurred, and selfish fleshly desires have taken over. Indifferent to reproach on Jehovah's holy name and the suffering caused to their loved ones, a few elders have been disloyal to their marriage vows. Certainly, such men have been causes for stumbling. Their sin cannot be lightly excused or dismissed, just because we live in an age of sexual permissiveness. *w* 9/1 16a

Wednesday, May 9

Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.—1 Cor. 10:12.

Many of our Christian brothers have kept separate from the world by refusing to buy political party cards even though their refusal meant suffering. Others have endured imprisonment because of their neutral position amid worldly controversies. Refusal to stop preaching the good news has brought other forms of persecution upon some. But what happens sometimes when we are faced with tests that involve the gradual erosion of adherence to Christian standards? Some falter due to permissiveness, failing to heed Paul's words above. We need to be on guard against permitting innocent-appearing situations to produce anxiety over things in this system, for that could choke the word that is in our heart or lead us into wrongdoing. This can result in our loss of divine favor and life just as much as letting persecution and other frontal attacks wear us down or defeat us. —Matt. 13:22. *w* 8/15 6-8, 15b

Thursday, May 10

Earnestly [endeavor] to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace. One body there is, and one spirit, . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.—Eph. 4:3-6.

Those who have left us have used "twisted things" to mislead God's people; one of them is to question the various teachings that Jehovah's people hold in common. Often this becomes a debate about words. (Acts 20:30; 1 Tim. 6:3, 4) They may also question the need for an organization to direct the minds

of God's people. Their view is, God's spirit can direct individuals without some central, organized body of men giving direction. They will declare that all one needs to do is to read the Bible. But Christendom has been reading the Bible for centuries. Yet see the confusion and misunderstanding as to the true message contained in God's Word! What a contrast this is to the foretold peace and unity among true Christians who not only read the Bible but search out and zealously apply its teachings! *w* 3/1 16a

Friday, May 11

*Beloved one, be an imitator, not of what is bad, but of what is good. He that does good originates with God. He that does bad has not seen God.
—3 John 11.*

Gaius was being admonished to 'imitate not what is bad but what is good.' The pursuit of goodness calls for the hating of what is wicked and actively clinging to what is good. (Ps. 97:10; Rom. 12:9) And how important this is, for he that does good things originates with God. Making an impressive point, the apostle added: "He that does bad has not seen God." Upon being resurrected to spirit life in heaven, spirit-anointed Christians could expect to see God and Christ. But on earth Jehovah's worshippers 'see' him by observing his acts in their behalf. Those 'seeing God' do so with 'the eyes of the heart.' (Eph. 1:18) With perception that involves both mind and heart, these individuals really come to know Jehovah as his worshippers who appreciate his qualities, such as his boundless love in giving his only-begotten Son for mankind.—John 3:16. *w* 4/1 18-20a

Saturday, May 12

The desire of the eyes . . . does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world.
—1 John 2:16.

A chief lure that Satan uses is love of material things and pleasures, referred to above. In our modern world there are more things than ever for the eyes to desire. There is the latest in new homes, cars, vans, boats, clothes, televisions, hi-fis, watches, computers, video games and other electronic devices of all kinds. Also, there are the many pleasures to be enjoyed in the way of music, dancing, movies, the theater, TV viewing, sports, and so forth. Now, of course, material things and pleasures are not necessarily wrong in themselves. Jehovah created a delightful material universe, including our earth with all its beauty, to please our sight and other senses. Obviously, various forms of recreation and entertainment can be beneficial when kept in a proper place. Yet, we need to be aware that Satan often uses these very things to lure Christians away from serving God. *w 1/15 12, 13*

Sunday, May 13

Every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ.—Acts 5:42.

The key to being an effective evangelizer is being genuinely interested in people, even as Jesus was. (Matt. 9:36-38) Let people see that you are interested in them as persons, and that you really believe the good news you are bringing to them. As to how this work is to be done, Jesus encouraged his followers to take the Kingdom message right to the homes of the peo-

ple. (Luke 10:5, 6) The apostles demonstrated God's wisdom by using this vital method of evangelizing, even as can be seen from the above. Later the apostle Paul reviewed his evangelizing work with fellow Christians, saying: "I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. But I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus."—Acts 20:20, 21. *w 2/1 12, 13a*

Monday, May 14

They will trample the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.—Rev. 11:2.

This "holy city" that the nations were to trample "underfoot for forty-two months" was not the "heavenly Jerusalem" in which the Messiah has been reigning since 1914. (Heb. 12:22) Rather, the trampling was upon the remnant for 42 lunar months, or three and a half lunar years, by the persecution during World War I. But by the time of the second convention of the Bible Students at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., in the summer of 1922, they had fully recovered spiritually. So the persecution of the remnant during World War I was part of "the sign" that would mark the fact that Jesus was present in his Kingdom from 1914 onward in Jerusalem above, free of all trampling. (Matt. 24:3, 9-13) Then it was that the remnant of the Israel of God launched out as never before to "advertise the King and the Kingdom." And in this preaching they are being assisted today by a great crowd of sheeplike ones. Are you having a joyful share therein? *w 8/1 14, 15a*

Tuesday, May 15

Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.—Heb. 13:17.

Those who are faithfully taking the lead are respected in the congregation. Loyal ones in the congregation willingly respond to their loving example and follow Paul's counsel above as well as that found at Hebrews 13:7: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith." Let all of us show submissiveness to the theocratic arrangement and respect for the elders who are genuinely taking the lead, that they may do this with joy and not with sighing. By doing this, we show that we also respect the Supreme Overseer, Jehovah God, and his Deputy Overseer, Jesus Christ, even as noted by the apostles Peter and John at 1 Peter 2:25 and Revelation 1:1; 2:1-3:22. *w 9/1 20, 21a*

Wednesday, May 16

You at one time walked . . . according to the ruler of the authority of the air.—Eph. 2:2.

Who first introduced permissiveness and laid the trap for Adam and Eve to become wayward? Jesus identified that one when he told the hypocritical Pharisees that they "wished to do the desires of their father, the Devil." (John 8:44) The Devil, who "has been sinning from the beginning," has sought control of humankind for selfish ends. Those making a practice

of lawlessness originate with him. (1 John 3:8) The Scriptures make it plain that Satanic influence is widespread, like the air that surrounds our planet. The apostle Paul spoke of the Devil as above. Individuals who allow themselves to become blinded by the world's thinking are more susceptible to his influence. The aim of the Devil and his demon host is, by every means at their disposal, to mislead mankind so as to do away with what is good and right. Hence, they generate a spirit of permissiveness. *w 8/15 3, 4b*

Thursday, May 17

I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart.—Matt. 11:29.

As a husband you should be very concerned about your wife's spirituality, studying the Bible and sharing in sacred service with her. You will avoid letting her shoulder weighty decisions that are rightly your responsibility. You will also see that she has opportunity to relax and rest up a bit. Such initiative gives a wife self-respect and real security. However, often men have difficulty finding a balance with headship. At times some will feel threatened even if a wife makes a suggestion or is somewhat critical. Jesus, the model for Christian heads, said the above. His humility was not on the surface, only to disappear when someone differed with him. The record at Genesis 16:5, 6 shows that Abraham was an example of humility. When your wife may blame you for some problem, try to respond as did Abraham. True, it is not always easy. But listen, try to understand and evaluate what your wife is saying. Try to see how you can work it out together. *w 6/1 6-8, 10a*

Friday, May 18

A little leaven ferments the whole lump.—1 Cor. 5:6.

Jehovah's standards with respect to the Christian congregation certainly prove wise and helpful. For instance, God directs that a Christian who practices sin and will not repent is to be expelled from the congregation. Others are commanded "to quit mixing" and "not even to eat with such persons." (1 Cor. 5:11) While according to some persons' standards this might seem unloving, God knows better. It lovingly protects the clean congregation. Adhering to God's standards also helps to prevent the spreading of false teachings and views. In the first century some turned apostate and tried to subvert the faith of others. God's standard was: 'Shun such empty speeches that violate what is holy.' (2 Tim. 2:16-19) Christians holding to that standard would not have been interested in listening to apostates, nor in obtaining any poisonous writings that these might distribute. *w 6/15 17, 18*

Saturday, May 19

Everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.—John 11:26.

Unquestionably, so late in this time of the end there are many live persons of faith and integrity who will never die off the face of the earth, God's footstool. What an unusual opportunity lies ahead of them! Because of never dying and being buried, they will not need to be resurrected from the dead during the thousand-year-long reign of Jesus Christ. In fact, they will survive to welcome back from the dead those sleeping in death for whom the King

Jesus Christ laid down his perfect human life as a ransom sacrifice. To those billions of resurrected humans the Har-Magedon survivors will be privileged to bear witness of all that Jehovah God did by Jesus Christ during this conclusion of the system of things. So, then, all through this crucial time of all times let these highly favored ones prove themselves to be integrity-keeping witnesses of Jehovah God to the vindication of his universal sovereignty. *w 7/1 21a*

Sunday, May 20

Really the objective of this mandate is love out of a clean heart and out of a good conscience and out of faith without hypocrisy.—1 Tim. 1:5.

Among the rewards for keeping clean as bearers of Jehovah's utensils are "a good conscience" and "a clean heart." Peace of mind is another reward. By keeping ourselves spiritually clean, we will never feel the pain that a bad conscience can give—the unhappiness, the sleepless nights, the fear of being discovered or exposed. Yes, by keeping ourselves clean we will never be hypocrites trying to hide something. Freedom from such things certainly is a fine reward. Another fine reward for keeping holy and clean is that we will have good relations with our brothers, our own families and outsiders. We will not have it on our conscience that we have stumbled someone. Moreover, by keeping clean we will be able to rebuild one another through love, even as we are admonished to do at 1 Corinthians 8:1. Truly such blessings are to be highly prized. *w 5/1 22, 23b*

Monday, May 21

Only behave in a manner worthy of the good news... standing firm in one spirit, with one soul striving side by side for the faith of the good news.—Phil. 1:27.

Even as in the first-century Christian congregation, so today a group of anointed Christian elders make up the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. And just as the decisions of the first-century governing body were communicated to the congregations, so today the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses receive instructions from the Governing Body and visits from traveling overseers. Now, as then, 'the congregations continue to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day.' (Acts 16:5) We have been delivered from the sectarian divisions of Christendom. Under the direction of our "one Lord," Jesus Christ, and his "steward," we press on unitedly in proclaiming the good news of God's Kingdom. We will continue "earnestly endeavoring to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace."—Eph. 4:3, 5; Luke 12:42. *w 9/15 21, 22a*

Tuesday, May 22

Carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit.—Eph. 6:18.

When we consider the mighty spirit forces fighting against us, we must acknowledge that on our own we could not possibly win. Yet with God's backing, and with the help of his organization we cannot lose. (Ps. 118:6-12; 1 Pet. 5:9) However, we must never forget that we are in a spiritual war, and that wartime is no time to be relaxing, enjoying only leisure and the pleasures of life. Rather, it is the time for vigorous training, alertness and self-sacrifice.

The enemy has been able to get some from among us to relax their guard, and these have become battle casualties. May this never happen to us! It will not if we keep on "the complete suit of armor from God" and "stand firm against the [crafty acts] of the Devil," regularly praying to God for help. (Eph. 6:11, 12) Remember, you cannot pray for help and then read immoral literature, go to immoral movies or daydream about or flirt with one of the opposite sex. You must work for what you request in prayer! *w 1/15 18, 21a*

Wednesday, May 23

See, therefore, God's kindness and severity. Toward those who fell there is severity, but toward you there is God's kindness, provided you remain in his kindness.—Rom. 11:22.

Just as the parable of the barren fig tree shows there are limits to Jehovah's patience, Paul's illustration of the olive tree, while highlighting Jehovah's kindness, also shows his severity. (Luke 13:6-9) In his kindness Jehovah had sent John the Baptist to the Jewish nation to tell them to "produce fruit that befits repentance" and to believe in Jesus. (Matt. 3:8; Acts 19:4) Because of their lack of faith they were "broken off." This meant "riches to people of the nations," inasmuch as Gentile 'wild olive branches' were grafted onto the Abrahamic-covenant tree to become part of the spiritual seed of Abraham. (Rom. 11:12, 17, 20, 21) But, as noted above, Paul adds a warning. To remain in Jehovah's kindness, Gentile Christians had to show strong faith in the primary Seed of Abraham, which faith they had to prove by Christian fruitage. *w 8/15 3, 6, 7a*

Thursday, May 24

Therefore keep awake, and bear in mind that for three years, night and day, I did not quit admonishing each one with tears.—Acts 20:31.

True, it must be stated that, with few exceptions, the elders worldwide have stood firm for integrity and truth. Their fine example in more than 45,000 congregations is a source of encouragement to God's people. During these "critical times hard to deal with," diligent overseers have been busy day and night, like Paul. (2 Tim. 3:1) These elders are willing to visit the spiritually sick person in his home, regardless of such things as distance or weather conditions. And how fine it is to see these older men taking the lead in field service on a regular basis! We also greatly appreciate the sacrifices the elders' wives sometimes have to make! At times, such women are left at home while their husbands attend special meetings or are making shepherding calls. Sometimes carefully made personal plans have been set aside because of some urgent congregation problem. *w 9/1 17, 18a*

Friday, May 25

Consequently, let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.

—1 Cor. 10:12.

Christians who have long served God might be drawn toward something tempting in the present system. A number have fallen away through the desire of the flesh. Of course, sexual desire is involved when youths give in to premarital sex. Some married persons have grown tired of their mate and met up with another person who seems more attractive, makes more interesting conversation or is

more successful in the world. Sadly, this has led to divorces and immoral remarriages. Others have fallen away to material pursuits, being drawn into business practices that are clearly dishonest or that ignore the government's licensing and tax requirements. Or they have promoted pyramid-type monetary ventures or get-rich-quick schemes that tempt people to take greedy advantage of their brothers. These endeavors have resulted in hard feelings, if not charges of fraud. All such have failed to heed Paul's advice above. *w 2/15 14-16a*

Saturday, May 26

Many deceivers have gone forth into the world, persons not confessing Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.—2 John 7.

Thus John explains why effort would be required to continue walking in love and truth. Evidently, some false teachers had been traveling about trying to gain converts among true Christians. Though professing to be Christians themselves, these misleading "deceivers" would not acknowledge that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh as a human. Such false teachings would undercut Jesus' role as Messiah and ransomer, including his exalted heavenly position. John called these apostates "the deceiver and the antichrist" because their teachings were deceptive and they themselves were opposed to Christ. The apostle's reference to "many antichrists" indicates that there were numerous enemies of Christ. (1 John 2:18) Denial of Jesus as the Christ and as God's Son embraces the denying of the Scriptural teachings concerning him. Faithful witnesses of Jehovah totally reject the views of such false teachers. *w 4/1 13, 14*

Sunday, May 27

Noah walked with the true God.

—Gen. 6:9.

In the time of Noah spirit sons of God who had disobeyed Him by coming down to earth to marry the daughters of men produced by them a hybrid offspring—the Nephilim. This name means "Fellers," and true to that designation they pursued their murderous way among mankind. (Gen. 6:1-13) The apostle Peter tells us that "the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3:6, 7) Fulfillment of Bible prophecy shows that the present world is now very near that day of judgment. What must we do in order to survive? Well, what did Noah do, along with his family? He "proceeded to do according to all that Jehovah had commanded him." (Gen. 7:5) This included his becoming "a preacher of righteousness." (2 Pet. 2:5) Should we not be following closely his example, as we seek salvation out of this modern world? —1 John 5:19. *w 7/15 7, 8*

Monday, May 28

His angels . . . will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness, and they will pitch them into the fiery furnace.

—Matt. 13:41, 42.

Jesus' illustration of the wheat and the weeds showed that the churches and sects of the "weeds," or apostate Christians, would be allowed to grow throughout the centuries. Only at "the conclusion of the system of things" would a clear distinction be made between these sham Christians

and the true "sons of the kingdom," the "wheat." (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-49) However, Jesus' parable also contains a warning to true Christians, whether they be anointed "sons of the kingdom" or their companions. The "wheat" has been separated from the "weeds" in the religious field since 1919. However, this does not mean that since then the angels have not continued to do what is stated above. Jude reminds us that the apostles foretold that "there will be ridiculers, proceeding according to their own desires for ungodly things."—Jude 17-19. *w 9/15 15, 16*

Tuesday, May 29

Select out of all the people capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit.—Ex. 18:21.

Since ancient times, qualified "older men" were used to take the lead in the affairs of God's people. (Num. 11:16, 17) So it is easy to see how the early Christian congregation would continue to use a theocratic arrangement similar to that approved by Jehovah in Moses' time. Under the guidance of God's holy spirit, those appointed as "older men," or elders, in the Christian congregation would have the qualities mentioned above. (1 Pet. 5:1-3) From Pentecost of 33 C.E. onward the congregation of believers grew rapidly. They were not separated into private, secluded Bible study groups as if they were some Essene sect. Christianity was not a private affair. It was to be announced to the nations. For this reason, active, capable men were needed to take the lead in the Christian organization. Logically they would be the "older men."—Matt. 5:14-16; 28:19, 20. *w 9/1 4, 11-14*

Wednesday, May 30

Truly God is one, who will declare circumcised people righteous as a result of faith and uncircumcised people righteous by means of their faith.
—Rom. 3:30.

Proud of being Abraham's offspring, the Jews thought they were the seed whereby all other nations would be blessed. It was against this background that the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome. The Christian congregation in Rome was made up of Jewish and many non-Jewish Christians. For different reasons both Jews and Gentiles had feelings of superiority—the Jews because they came from the original Abrahamic stock—the Gentiles because they had been admitted into special Abrahamic-covenant privileges as a result of lack of faith on the part of unbelieving Jews. Paul sought to convince Christians of Jewish and non-Jewish origin that both groups owed their righteous standing before God to their faith in Christ rather than to works. In writing his letter, Paul's aim was Christian unity and productivity, to the glory of Jehovah. *w 8/15 10-12*

Friday, June 1

I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life; and everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.
—John 11:25, 26.

For a person never to die at all would mean that such a favored individual would stay living as a mortal man or woman here on earth for all time! That is a reasonable conclusion to draw, is it not? The sacred Hebrew Scriptures hold out no heavenly hope, and so the Jews

Thursday, May 31

Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.—Prov. 27:11.

By keeping ourselves clean and by upbuilding one another, we will experience that greater happiness of giving, of contributing to the spiritual well-being of others, even as we read at Acts 20:35: "I have exhibited to you in all things that by thus laboring you must assist those who are weak, and must bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said, 'There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.'" But, above all, by keeping clean as bearers of Jehovah's utensils we will make glad the heart of our heavenly Father and will enable him to answer taunting Satan. Surely, in view of all that God has done for us, we owe this to him. So as his witnesses, may we all keep clean, holy, as bearers of his utensils. To God's glory, honor and praise, to the upbuilding of our brothers and our families, and with a view to our everlasting salvation, let us keep ourselves clean! *w 5/1 23, 24b*

who held strictly to these Scriptures had no heavenly hope or desire. But the Hebrew Scriptures do hold out the hope of everlasting life. (Ps. 37:29; Job 14:13-15) To a natural Jew everlasting life on earth under the Kingdom of the promised Messiah was a normal hope and expectation. Generally, however, that is not the outlook of the religious systems of Christendom. But it is held out also by the Christian Greek Scriptures, even as can be seen by the words of Jesus. It is our privilege to make this hope known to others. *w 10/1 1-3*

Saturday, June 2

Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force.—Ps. 110:3.

Yes, God's servants today have been vigorous in doing his will, holding fast to their first love for Jehovah. As an organized people, Jehovah's Witnesses have maintained their enthusiasm and zeal for his service all through the difficult conclusion of this system. Nevertheless, it is possible for an individual Witness to lose the love he had at first. Day-to-day problems may lead him to forget the great things Jehovah has done for him. He may get tired of waiting for Jehovah's purposes to be fulfilled and may start to be attracted by the material advantages the world offers, or may perhaps feel a need to spend more time in recreation than he once did. Christian responsibilities, such as attendance at meetings or assemblies, preparing talks and sharing in field service may start to feel burdensome. If we find such attitudes developing in us, we should take to heart the words of the psalmist above. *w 11/1 1-3a*

Sunday, June 3

Put a mark on the foreheads of the men that are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the midst of it.
—Ezek. 9:4.

The nuclear age is upon us. The whole world is now menaced with nuclear warfare! The Almighty Creator of the atom with its nucleus well knows that. What is his Word for our day that needs to be preached worldwide? In our time he has had a figurative 'man clothed with linen, with a secretary's inkhorn at his side,' doing a

marking work. This "man" has been marking the foreheads of the people who are crying and sighing over all the detestable things that are being done, particularly in the religious realm of Christendom, which professes to worship God. (Ezekiel, chapter 9) In a system of things that is doomed to early destruction, these righthearted ones are being marked for preservation into a new and righteous system of things. It is the privilege of those of the "great crowd" to join the 'man in linen' to see that this marking work gets done. *w 12/15 1, 2*

Monday, June 4

Moreover, this I say, brothers, the time left is reduced. Henceforth let those who have wives be as though they had none.
—1 Cor. 7:29.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 7 Paul was discussing marriage among Christians. While recommending singleness as the better course, he acknowledged that those who enter wedlock "commit no sin." Yet he added that they would have "tribulation in their flesh," for marriage is attended by certain anxieties. (1 Cor. 7:28) For instance, the illness of a loved one can bring about distress. Added tribulation can also result from persecution. Then Paul went on to say the above. Since "the time left is reduced," married Christians should not devote themselves so completely to marriage privileges and duties as though these are their whole life. Rather, they should keep Kingdom interests first in their life, although not failing to fulfill marital responsibilities. Living as we do in "the last days," we have all the more reason to follow this inspired counsel. —2 Tim. 3:1-5. *w 10/15 3, 4a*

Tuesday, June 5

This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved; listen to him.—Matt. 17:5.

What impression did the transfiguration leave with the apostles? How should it affect us today? Some 30 years later, Peter could still recall that spectacle in all its brilliance. "Consequently," he said, "we have the prophetic word made more sure." (2 Pet. 1:19) What "prophetic word"? Why, prophecies such as Daniel 7:13, 14! By that time "the prophetic word" had come to include, too, prophecies given by Jesus Christ himself. Among these was his Kingdom prophecy on "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3-14, 30, 31) If Peter and his companions were so moved by that prophetic vision, how much greater impact should it have on us today! Now that the Son of man has arrived in his glory, to sit down on his glorious throne in the heavens, surely it is high time to "listen to him"! We indeed do well in paying attention to the prophetic word, "as to a lamp shining in a dark place," allowing it to illuminate our hearts. *w 11/15 3-6*

Wednesday, June 6

An overseer must be free from accusation as God's steward, . . . not greedy of dishonest gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled.—Titus 1:7, 8.

That the Greek word translated "overseer" implies a "mature man, suitable by his experience and prudence for the ruling of his family or people" is highlighted in the requirements that Paul spelled out to Titus for those Christians who would qualify to serve as over-

seers. A careful review of these requirements helps us to appreciate that an "older man" in the Christian congregation had to reach a high standard of conduct and spirituality. It is also interesting to note how Paul uses the Greek terms *presbyteros* and *episkopos*, "older man" and "overseer." We can deduce from this that the qualified older men fulfilled the duties of overseer in the congregations. Other texts show there could be a number of such older men—overseers in the same congregation.—Acts 14:23; 20:28; Phil. 1:1. *w 9/1 15, 16*

Thursday, June 7

You were cut out of the olive tree that is wild by nature and were grafted contrary to nature into the garden olive tree.—Rom. 11:24.

By showing the faith of Abraham a limited number of non-Jews would prove to be spiritual Jews, part of spiritual Israel. Paul illustrated the outworking of this sacred secret by an unusual horticultural procedure. The normal procedure is to graft shoots from a cultivated tree onto a wild stock, in order to make it productive, as Paul was well aware. He told the Gentile Christians that they had been "grafted contrary to nature into the garden olive tree." He thus likened the non-Jews who would be admitted into the Abrahamic covenant to scions, or shoots, from a wild olive tree that would be grafted onto the trunk of a "garden olive tree." They would replace the natural branches that had been lopped off, these representing the fleshly Jews who had been rejected because of their lack of faith. This unusual illustration served as a forceful exposure of the proud unbelieving Jews. *w 8/15 16, 17*

Friday, June 8

He [is] the One who firmly established it, who did not create [the earth] simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited.—Isa. 45:18.

Yes, "inhabited" the earth will yet be in God's due time with a perfect race of human-kind, favored with the gift of eternal life! The above reassuring statement of God's purpose is not contradicted by the apostle Peter when he warns us that the heavens and the earth that are now will pass away. No, for right after reminding us of this eventuality, now so close at hand, he tells of a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness is to dwell. (2 Pet. 3:13) God's promise of such new heavens and new earth is preserved in Isaiah 65:17. As to how long these will last, we are told at Isaiah 66:22: "For just as the new heavens and the new earth that I am making are standing before me," is the utterance of Jehovah, "so the offspring of you people and the name of you people will keep standing." This is the hope of the great crowd of "other sheep." *w 10/1 7, 8*

Saturday, June 9

Most of the brothers . . . speak the word of God fearlessly.—Phil. 1:14.

When we call to mind that today there are witnesses of Jehovah in more than 40 lands where their work is banned or under legal restriction—doubtless more Christians now than the number imprisoned in the first and second centuries—Jehovah's Witnesses of today are not fearful of the things they must suffer, including imprisonment. The imprisonment of Christians can have an effect upon fellow Christians opposite

to what the enemy intended. The imprisoned apostle Paul wrote from his confinement as above. Today, as in Paul's day, it is not a man-made message that we are fearlessly speaking. It is the timely message drawn from the Holy Bible, the inspired Word of the Most High God, Jehovah. In that Word he tells us that we must be his witnesses. (Isa. 43:10, 12) Since he tells us to speak forth his infallible Word, what creature, high or low station, has the right or the authority to order us to stop speaking it? *w 12/15 8-10*

Sunday, June 10

That is why it is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us.—Heb. 2:1.

At Hebrews 1:1-4 the apostle Paul emphasized the need to take the prophetic word into our hearts. That prophetic word spoken by Jesus was of tremendous import. If heeded, it would lead to salvation. Now we have all the more reason to listen to Jesus' words. However, let it be emphasized that our paying attention to the prophetic word should not be just for the purpose of gaining knowledge. Far from it! That word should stimulate us to act on that knowledge, causing us to do God's will, and especially now, "in the final part of the days." (Isa. 2:2, 3) That word enables us to continue walking in the light of the truth and in precious intimacy with our God. To gain enduring benefits from it, we must cultivate a deep love for the Bible, taking its message down into our hearts. Thus we will be motivated always to do God's will and to keep ourselves in his love.—Mark 12:29-31; Jude 20, 21. *w 11/15 7, 8*

Monday, June 11

Let . . . those making use of the world [be] as those not using it to the full. —1 Cor. 7:29-31.

In this passage the Greek word rendered "world" applies not directly to mankind, as it does in John 3:16, but to the human sphere of life and its framework. Mankind has its language groups, nations, tribes, families, rich and poor, and the general framework that surrounds and affects humans. Yes, it was to the human sphere of life and what it holds out that Paul referred when he said the above words. Paul also indicated that Christians should 'not use the world to the full' because "the scene of this world is changing." This world is like the changing scenes on a stage. Though it may appear attractive, its actors and settings change. Humans come 'on stage,' and some act haughtily. But soon they depart along with their generation and are forgotten. In our time, the 'curtain is about to go down' on this old world! What good reason for our "not using it to the full!" *w 10/15 5, 6a*

Tuesday, June 12

Happy is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads . . . day and night. —Ps. 1:1, 2.

How did missionary Stanley Jones keep his love for Jehovah strong while serving seven years in solitary confinement in a Chinese prison, isolated from his Christian brothers, without even a Bible? He wrote down all the scriptures he could remember and added to these any Bible quotations he could find in the "religion" columns of newspapers that were sometimes sent to him. Thus he built

up a reservoir of Bible texts that formed the basis of a personal study and meditation program. He knew that if he failed to keep his heart and mind filled with God's thoughts, his faith would quickly become dull. True, most of us are not in prison. Nevertheless, for much of the time we are exposed to the thinking of this world. Hence, if we do not spend time fortifying our hearts and minds, we will likely become weak spiritually and our love will grow cold. But not if we are like the man described above. *w 11/1 6-8a*

Wednesday, June 13

I have made your name known to them and will make it known. —John 17:26.

The warm feeling of appreciation that the divine name Jehovah should bring to our hearts should include the important fact that he miraculously sent to earth his First-born, the Word, who became Jesus Christ. (Heb. 1:6; John 1:1-3) In prayer to his heavenly Father, Jesus said the above. It was not that his followers did not already know God's name. They saw this name both in their Hebrew Bible scrolls and in the Greek Bible translation they used. But as a result of Jesus' teaching, the name took on added meaning—just as it had done as a result of Jehovah's acts back in Moses' day. Jesus marvelously expanded our knowledge and appreciation of Jehovah, of his personality and of his purposes. We know Jehovah's name in a far grander way through Jesus, who said: "What I teach is not mine, but belongs to him that sent me." Jesus provided the ransom and way of approach to the Father. —John 7:16; 14:6. *w 12/1 16*

Thursday, June 14

But if ever that evil slave should say in his heart, "My master is delaying." —Matt. 24:48.

Today some disloyal ones thus manifest the traits of the "evil slave." They identify themselves with the "ridiculers" who say: "Where is this promised presence of his?" (2 Pet. 3:1-7) By criticizing "the faithful and discreet slave" class from whom they first gained their knowledge of the way of the truth, they start to beat their fellow slaves. But if they persist in their divisive attitude, in due time they are collected out by the angels. This reminds us of what Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For there must also be sects among you, that the persons approved may also become manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11:19) Yes, if any today try quietly to "bring in destructive sects" among Jehovah's Witnesses, this provides a fine opportunity for loyal Christians to prove themselves to be persons approved by God and Christ. They can and must show that they appreciate true Christian unity. —2 Pet. 2:1. *w 9/15 17-19*

Friday, June 15

The sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them. —Rev. 20:13.

Today we as Jehovah's Witnesses who are walking with God rejoice at what is forevisioned at Revelation 20:11-14. We expect to welcome the resurrected dead into an earth under cultivation for a worldwide Paradise. Lovingly the survivors of the end of this old world will have made ample preparations for the return of the ransomed human dead. Doubtless

instructions from heaven will be given to the survivors to make due provisions for the return of the billions of the human dead. There will also be a great educational work to be done. This is in line with the divine purpose for the returning dead humans to take full advantage of the benefits of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Only by doing this will they be authorized to live on an Edenic earth, in human perfection. Wisely those of the "great crowd" are preparing themselves to share in that educational program. *w 10/1 18-21*

Saturday, June 16

Most of the brothers in the Lord, feeling confidence by reason of my prison bonds, are showing all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly. —Phil. 1:14.

Because he appealed to Caesar, Paul was in jail in Rome awaiting trial. It was under those circumstances that, when writing to his brothers in Philippi, he wrote the above. Somewhat like this, when World War I ended in 1918, officers and members of the headquarters staff of the Society found themselves in prison under false charges. Peace having now set in, courageous steps were promptly taken by the brothers on the outside to secure their release. In 1919 they were released from prison and their case was thrown out of court. The preaching of the Kingdom good news was taken up with a courage greater than ever before, with a defiance of Babylon the Great. Today, with far more of our brothers in prison than during World War I, it devolves upon us on the outside to "speak the word of God fearlessly." *w 12/15 14-16a*

Sunday, June 17

My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me.

—John 4:34.

Teaching the truth nourished Jesus and built him up. Similarly, when we speak to others about God's Kingdom, this impresses vital facts on our mind and heart and builds up our skills in defending the truth. Not, however, that preaching to others is a substitute for personal study. No. A balance is needed between these two activities. If we eat plenty of physical food but get no exercise, ultimately our body suffers. On the other hand, if we get a lot of exercise without eating enough food, eventually we 'burn out' physically. Similarly, if we engage in much personal study without preaching to others, we are likely to become unbalanced. Peter associated "activity" with 'keeping our senses.' (1 Pet. 1:13) If we preach to others without doing personal study, then we may 'burn out.' However, if we engage in personal study and then go out and tell others what we have learned, we will remain spiritually healthy. *w 11/1 19, 20a*

Monday, June 18

Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the living God.—Heb. 3:12.

The Bible describes in great detail the waywardness of ancient Israel. And why? "For a warning to us." (1 Cor. 10:11) This should instill in us godly fear, lest we develop "a wicked heart lacking faith." The Bible record provides prophetic patterns that show that God will again execute vengeance but on a far more extensive scale than in the days of apostate Israel.

God's punishment of that backsliding nation in 607 B.C.E., and again in 70 C.E., is pictorial of how, shortly, his burning anger will be poured out on Christendom in particular. We do well to heed that prophetic word! Indisputably, we have entered "the last days" of Satan's system of world rulership. (2 Tim. 3:1-5, 13) In the churches of Christendom there are no refreshing waters of truth. In contrast, however, there is an abundance of spiritual refreshment to be found among those faithfully serving Jehovah. Are you making good use of it? *w 11/15 9-11*

Tuesday, June 19

Let . . . those making use of the world [be] as those not using it to the full.—1 Cor. 7:29-31.

As witnesses of Jehovah living in this system of things, we cannot actually get out of the world. So we can appropriately use the world in balanced, proper, limited ways. For instance, since we pay our taxes, we are entitled to certain services furnished by the governmental "superior authorities." (Rom. 13:1-7) We properly use postal, police and other lawfully services, such as transportation systems. For what purpose? For proper living and to carry on the God-given work of Kingdom witnessing. But since we are not to use the world "to the full," all such things are used only to the extent that they serve Christian interests. We cannot afford to let worldly interests dominate us. Rather, we need to center our life on our relationship with Jehovah, on our worship of him and our service to him. Do our actions reveal that "intimacy with God" is really important to us?—Job 29:4. *w 10/15 5, 9, 10a*

Wednesday, June 20

Tell us when these things shall be,—and what the sign of thy presence and the conclusion of the age.—Matt. 24:3, The Emphasised Bible.

The installation of the Messiah as King at Jehovah's right hand in the year 1914 marked the start of his invisible presence with respect to our earth. Why so? Because as the newly installed King over the earth it was proper for him to turn his attention to his earthly domain, then occupied by his enemies, aspirants for imperial world domination. 'The rod of his strength' was sent out of "the Jerusalem above," toward our earth. At Jehovah's command he began to 'rule in the midst of his enemies' down at the earth. It was also to the earth that he hurled down the Devil and his demons out of heaven. (Ps. 110:1, 2; Gal. 4:26; Rev. 12:7-17) "The sign" that the Messiah Jesus described as evidence of his invisible "presence" came into visibility at the end of the Gentile Times in 1914. Jesus' answer corresponds with the prophecy made by David at Psalm 110:1-4. *w 8/1 7-9a*

Thursday, June 21

Salvation of the righteous ones is from Jehovah; he is their fortress in the time of distress.—Ps. 37:39.

Those millions of Jehovah's Witnesses today who look forward in strong faith to the fulfillment of God's promise that 'the righteous will possess the earth and reside forever upon it' are assured also of the promise stated above. Whatever the situations that may arise in this violent world, Jehovah is able 'to safeguard his people as the pupil of his eye.' (Ps. 37:29, 39; Deut. 32:10; Dan. 3:19-27) He is

even able, if he so chooses, to preserve his own through such a horror as a nuclear holocaust. This was demonstrated in the experience of a faithful servant of Jehovah who was undergoing persecutions in a Japanese prison. On the morning of August 6, 1945, a departure from his usual schedule placed him in such a position that he was unharmed by the atom bomb's explosion. He was thankful to Jehovah that he could spend the remaining years of his life in the pioneer service. Nothing is too wonderful for Jehovah. *w 7/15 2, 3a*

Friday, June 22

But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near.—Luke 21:28.

Does everybody have to feel faint out of fear because of the things seen coming upon the earth? (Luke 21:25, 26) Not at all! For Jesus himself made an exception of his faithful disciples, saying to them the above. Since we have the visible proof in world conditions and events that our deliverance is near, at our very door, as it were, we rejoice and do not share the anguish of the Gentile nations. And where do these today take their stand on the Kingdom issue? Both the remnant and their "other sheep" companions take their stand in loyal support of Jehovah's Kingdom by Christ. (John 10:14) They recognize that the time is here for them to proclaim to everybody that since 1914 that superhuman, heavenly government rules and that it will bring this worldly system of things to its complete end. Upon them falls the obligation to carry out Jesus' prophecy at Matthew 24:14. *w 1/1 6-8*

Saturday, June 23

Look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus.—Heb. 12:2.

Jesus Christ provides the chief example of *unworldliness*. (Matt. 8:20; Heb. 7:26) We who are imperfect cannot follow his steps perfectly. But we ought to do our best, with Jehovah's help. So, if we find ourselves in the happy throng of Jehovah's worshippers, we are blessed indeed. We have found something far better than all that this corrupt and dying world can offer. So let us cling to true worship, then, and remain free of this world's spirit. To that end, may we appeal often to the "Hearer of prayer," seeking the aid of his holy spirit, always yielding to the counsel of his Word and never abandoning the ranks of the long—now centuries-old—line of Jehovah's faithful witnesses. (Ps. 65:2) May it be our determination not to use this world to the full. Rather, may we keep our mind and heart fixed on the doing of Jehovah's will. If we do so, we will have the support of Jehovah's "everlasting arms."—Deut. 33:27. *An American Translation. w 10/15 19-21b*

Sunday, June 24

I know your deeds—look! I have set before you an opened door, which no one can shut.
—Rev. 3:8.

It is noteworthy that while the Christians in Ephesus had allowed the 'love they had at first' to cool off, those of another congregation in the neighborhood had kept busy, and their love was still strong. (Rev. 2:4) Thus Jesus said to the faithful congregation in Philadelphia the above. What deeds will help a modern-day Christian witness of Jehovah to maintain the 'love

he had at first'? Among other deeds, heeding Jesus' command to "go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matt. 28:19) That is why Paul advised the Ephesians to have their "feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace" and to be equipped with "the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word." (Eph. 6:15-17) Yes, there is a close relationship between zeal and the work of preaching and making disciples. True, zeal makes us want to do this work. But the preaching work will, in turn, stimulate our zeal. *w 11/1 17-19a*

Monday, June 25

Just as the new heavens and the new earth . . . are standing before me . . . so the offspring of you people and the name of you people will keep standing.
—Isa. 66:22.

Ah, yes, the new heavens and the new earth will keep standing before Jehovah; they will stand firm, they will endure, they will continue! The "new earth" is made up of a righteous human race that will inhabit the cleansed earthly globe, which the Creator formed "even to be inhabited." (Isa. 45:18) The "new heavens," which are new righteous heavenly powers, are to be in charge of the cleansed earth and its righteous inhabitants. Certainly, then, Jehovah God will not have created our marvelous earthly globe "simply for nothing." It will yet vindicate him as Maker! The picture that students of world affairs generally paint leaves no hope of human survival on earth into a new and better system of things. Thankful we can be that their thoughts are not the thoughts of earth's Creator, neither are their ways his ways. —Isa. 55:8-11. *w 10/1 8-10*

Tuesday, June 26

Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man.
—Luke 21:36.

The final outcome of Armageddon will be directed by the King of kings and his angelic forces, who will dispose of his enemies down to the last surviving straggler. Even Satan and his demons will be abyssed. The only "flesh" to be saved out of the "great tribulation" will be, as Jesus himself indicated, flesh which has Jehovah's consideration. (Matt. 24:21, 22) No others are counted righteous in Jehovah's sight. And as foretold at Habakkuk 2:3, the prophetic word of Jehovah keeps "panting on" toward its final fulfillment. We should "keep in expectation of it." Therefore, let us, as Jehovah's Witnesses, declare boldly "the day of vengeance on the part of our God" and be outspoken like Jesus' disciples in comforting the mourning ones with the good news of salvation, all the time heeding Jesus' words above.—Isa. 61:1, 2. *w 11/15 18-20*

Wednesday, June 27

Now we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God.
—1 Cor. 2:12.

Thus Paul contrasted the world's spirit with the spirit of God. Since the world's pattern of thought and conduct runs counter to the influence of God's holy spirit and the instruction found in his Word, godly persons must shun its spirit. Instead, lovers of Jehovah properly cultivate and manifest the holy spirit's fruitage of love, joy, peace, long-

suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22, 23) Interestingly, the aged apostle John showed that God's true "inspired expressions" came through the genuine Christian congregation, not through unchristian worldly sources. (1 John 4:1-6) Employment and other activities make it necessary for us to deal with the world in certain ways. But we should not become engrossed in it, for did not Jesus say that his followers are "no part of the world"? (John 17:14) Through Christ we have been freed from this world. *w 10/15 12-14a*

Thursday, June 28

I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think.
—Rom. 12:3.

Prominence in this system is a thing to which a Christian might 'turn back.' (Gal. 4:9) Admittedly, it is proper to want others to think well of us; Christian elders must "have a fine testimony from people on the outside." (1 Tim. 3:7) God's Word does advise, though, as above. The world's emphasis on being *somebody* may make it difficult for a few to continue seeking Christian modesty and a good standing with God. Thus youths often face this, for teachers and students urge them to be prominent in sports, student government or clubs. They may also face pressure about going to college so as to get a prestigious job. Some parents have added to the pressure because of their own desire for prestige through a child's accomplishments. You may have heard parents say such things as, 'I do not want my son to be a common laborer all his life.'—Compare Mark 6:3. *w 6/15 14, 15a*

Friday, June 29

The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up.
—Gen. 8:21.

There is something in the air of this wicked world. Most of us agree that whatever it is that permeates this world's thinking and conduct gives evidence of being unhealthy and deadly. We can see the results in a morally and spiritually sick society. An obvious symptom of this sickness is permissiveness, which easily leads to lawlessness. It is not just the ordinary principles of acceptable human behavior that many want to get away from; rather, they seek to cast off virtually all restraints. They clamor for their right to do whatever they please, whenever they please, and to be free from controlling authority, whether this be parents, law-enforcement agencies or society's moral restrictions. Who or what is behind this spirit of disobedience? Why must Christians put up a determined fight to counteract such permissiveness? Because of Satan's influence and our heritage from Adam. *w 8/15 1-3b*

Sunday, July 1

Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.—Matt. 6:9, 10.

Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray to the Creator this prayer. For it to be answered through the coming of his heavenly Kingdom, our literal earth must survive the approaching end of the present doomed system of things. Upon it, surviving mankind will do the heavenly Father's will just as the angels in heaven loyally

Saturday, June 30

Put a mark on the foreheads of the men that are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the midst of it.
—Ezek. 9:4.

Recalling the course of conduct of Christendom's clergy during World Wars I and II, honest-hearted people feel distress at what they have reason to believe the religious leaders of Christendom would do during a likely nuclear war on a world scale. Expecting better things of so-called Christian leaders, they are deeply disturbed at what the clergy now make allowance for in this highly immoral, violent and religiously divided world. No improvement of worldly things is in sight. In the case of so many righthearted people inside and outside of Christendom, what will quiet their fears of being violently exterminated en masse shortly? Well, they may be grieved at the shape of things. But, most importantly, are they grieved because the name of the God of the Holy Bible is involved? It is our privilege to mark such ones. *w 12/15 2, 3*

do it. What a marvelous prospect thus lies before the doers of God's will on the cleansed earth! Those who look forward to endless service of the heavenly Father on a Paradise earth will start off the "new earth" under the Messianic "new heavens." (2 Pet. 3:13) In time this promised "new earth" will be enlarged by the resurrection of the ransomed dead of mankind who will be taught righteousness and who will be obliged to do what is righteous. What a wonderful message to make known to others! *w 10/1 13, 14*

Monday, July 2

Gather the older men of Israel. . . . And they will certainly listen to your voice, and you must come, you and the older men of Israel, to the king of Egypt.—Ex. 3:16, 18.

The Greek terms for "overseer" and "older man" have rich vitality of meaning. For thousands of years these words have been associated with an integral part of Jehovah's organizational arrangement for his people. Bible history, in fact, takes us back to the 16th century B.C.E. when Moses received the commission from Jehovah to go back to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of slavery. Since he had been away from his own people for some 40 years, to whom would he present his credentials? God's Word answers as above. Yes, evidently from the time of the patriarchs the older men were highly esteemed because of their experience, knowledge, wisdom and sound judgment. They were the ones Moses had to convince so that they would accept him as their God-appointed leader for deliverance. The same qualities are required of elders today. *w 9/1 1-3*

Tuesday, July 3

I will remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.—Rev. 2:5.

Some may view a certain amount of cooling off of the Ephesians' love as understandable. After all, there had been a congregation in Ephesus for more than 40 years when Jesus sent his message through John. Many, doubtless, did not personally remember the fine example of Aquila and Priscilla or the exciting preaching of Apollos. Paul had been dead for 30 years. So it might be expected

that the Ephesian Christians would settle down, would lose their sense of urgency and zeal. However, Jesus did not excuse such a trend. Others who had been Christians as long as the Ephesians or longer had not lost their first love. There was John, for example. Moreover, those of the congregation in Philadelphia gave strong evidence that they had not lost the love they had at first. (Rev. 3:7-11) Therefore, Jesus was not unreasonable in saying what he did to those Ephesians. And what he said we individually want to take to heart. *w 11/1 15-17*

Wednesday, July 4

Brothers, do not become young children in powers of understanding, but be babes as to badness; yet become full-grown in powers of understanding.—1 Cor. 14:20.

Parents, what are you doing to help your children to distinguish between acceptable music and the debasing kind? As Christians, can you properly allow them to listen to songs featuring demonism, sexual immorality, drug abuse and violence? Well, then, before buying a record or allowing your children to listen to certain music, take the time to examine the album cover to see if it gives evidence of corrupt influences. Consider the titles and the lyrics of the songs. If the songs are debasing, discuss this kindly with your youngsters. You might point out that all Christians should be 'babes as to badness but full-grown in powers of understanding,' not seeking knowledge of vile things or filling their minds with debasing ideas. After such a discussion, doubtless you will want to get rid of any Scripturally objectionable records in your possession. *w 10/15 21*

Thursday, July 5

Jehovah will certainly comfort Zion. . . . he will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert plain like the garden of Jehovah.—Isa. 51:3.

Jehovah's anointed people today have entered a spiritual paradise indeed! How well this is described in Isaiah 35:1-7! It is comparable to what the apostle Paul describes at 2 Corinthians 12:3, 4, referring apparently to his own experience. He was caught away into paradise and heard words which it was not lawful for him to utter. But it is lawful, today, to speak of the spiritual paradise that now exists among God's anointed remnant, and in which a great crowd out of all nations has come to share! There thrives among them a delightfully prosperous organization, the global society of Jehovah's Witnesses, united in the bond of love and in oneness of purpose and action. A spiritual paradise indeed! As long as they continue to cultivate this spiritual paradise, Jehovah's Witnesses will not be harmed by the weapons hurled at them by Satan.—Ps. 91:1-11. *w 11/15 13-15a*

Friday, July 6

A ruin, a ruin, a ruin I shall make it, . . . until he comes who has the legal right, and I must give it to him.—Ezek. 21:27.

In view of the Bible's prophetic count of time, the seven symbolic times, or years, would amount to 2,520 years. Counted from the year 607 B.C.E., when Jerusalem, the city of the great King, was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and thus the trampling on Jerusalem by the Gentiles began, those 2,520 years would end in the autumn of the year 1914 of our Common Era. However, in the residence

of "the King of the heavens," it was the time for him to demonstrate that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." (Dan. 4:22, 29, *The Jewish Publication Society of America*) Then it was the due time for him to "come whose right it is" and for the Most High to "give it to him." (Ezek. 21:30-32, *JP*; 21:25-27) That one was the glorified Messiah, Jesus Christ, at which time Psalm 110:1, 2 was fulfilled. This certainly meant that the times of the Gentiles had indeed ended. *w 8/1 18, 19*

Saturday, July 7

Most of the brothers . . . are showing all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly.—Phil. 1:14.

Today, the "other sheep" are displaying commendable courage as they disregard what the world might think and flock to the "one shepherd" as their God-given Leader and Savior. Like their Shepherd, they speak the Word of God fearlessly. The fearful attitude of the world worsens. Under demon influence the nations are being marched to Armageddon for the final showdown fight. We will safely stand upon the sidelines and will watch as our God gains the victory. Surviving the Battle of all battles, we will join the exultant hosts of heaven in sounding forth the praises of the undefeatable God, Jehovah, and his mighty Field Marshal, Jesus Christ. This is now no time for retreat! Forward, then, you unified flock of Jehovah's Witnesses, in 'speaking the word of God fearlessly' until the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.—Isa. 11:9. *w 12/15 15, 21, 22a*

Sunday, July 8

I said to him: "My lord, you are the one that knows." And he said to me: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—Rev. 7:14.

Because these are maintaining their righteous standing before God he will preserve them alive on earth clear through "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon, with which this old system of things will end. (Rev. 16:14, 16) So these survivors will need no resurrection from the dead in order to come to life on earth. In their case the words of Jesus will be true in a very literal sense: "Everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all." (John 11:26) By unswervingly carrying out their dedication to Jehovah God and doing his will as it is made known to them through the King Jesus Christ, they will attain to actual perfect righteousness by the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign. What a prospect to tell others about! *w 10/1 17-19a*

Monday, July 9

The intimacy with Jehovah belongs to those fearful of him.—Ps. 25:14.

Do we recognize the superlative value of spiritual things? Jesus illustrated the preciousness of the Kingdom by "one pearl" so valuable that a merchant "promptly sold all the things he had and bought it." (Matt. 13:45, 46) Thus Jesus showed that a person appreciating the true value of gaining the Kingdom would be willing to part with any earthly treasure to do so. If the Kingdom and its interests, and particularly

"intimacy with Jehovah," mean that much to us, we will keep every contact with the world as light as possible. It is impossible to enjoy "intimacy with Jehovah" while having "the spirit of the world." (1 Cor. 2:12) The spirit or energizing force that controls the world of unrighteous human society is demonic and alienated from God. The world tempts us to cater to selfishness and the desires of the fallen flesh, resulting in God's enmity rather than his intimacy. *w 10/15 10, 11a*

Tuesday, July 10

Now these things went on befalling them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived.—1 Cor. 10:11.

Why do people lose their initial love for Jehovah and zeal for doing his will? Remember the Israelites who were led out of Egypt by Moses. Having witnessed Jehovah's powerful works climaxed by the destruction of Pharaoh and his armies in the Red Sea, God's delivered people were highly enthusiastic. "Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah?" they sang ecstatically. (Ex. 15:11) Later, when Jehovah made a covenant with them, they unanimously declared: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do and be obedient." (Ex. 24:7) Yet the mood of the Israelites quickly changed. A temporary lack of water, a lack of variety in their diet, a fear of the Canaanites and other problems made them forget Jehovah's mighty acts and the covenant he had made with them. They began to think only of the leeks and the onions of Egypt. May we not make the same mistake! *w 11/1 18, 19*

Wednesday, July 11

The very ones redeemed by Jehovah will return and certainly come to Zion with a joyful cry . . . To exultation and rejoicing they will attain, and grief and sighing must flee away.—Isa. 35:10.

Truly, this is a spiritual paradise, reminding us of the words of Isaiah 51:3. Yes, these prophecies are now having a marvelous fulfillment as to the remnant. But the number of these anointed ones on earth has dwindled to less than 0.4 percent of all Witnesses. The vast majority of Jehovah's Witnesses today do not have any anointed ones in their midst. So what of the millions of the "great crowd"? True, they share with the remnant in the joys of the spiritual paradise. But do we not see their marvelous hope of a Paradise earth illustrated in those same prophecies? Indeed, we do! For, remember, it was here on earth, in Eden, that Paradise was lost by mankind. Therefore, it is here that Jehovah's purpose toward the earth and man must be vindicated. Earth must yet be made into a global Paradise. *w 11/15 13, 15, 16a*

Thursday, July 12

May [God] grant you according to the riches of his glory to be made mighty in the man you are inside with power through his spirit.—Eph. 3:16.

A wife's expression of appreciation for the good her husband does along with mercy will capture not just the eye of her husband but also his very heart. And while the responsibilities that come with marriage may seem to be overwhelming, we can receive help from God. It is this inner strength that can

enable us to carry any load, for Jehovah, through his power, can "do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask." (Eph. 3:20) Yes, a great help in dealing with marital problems is prayer, even as experience has shown. Actually, a Christian's marriage should be centered around his relationship with God, not simply around pleasing his mate, for Paul also wrote: "Let those who have wives be as though they had none." (1 Cor. 7:29) So occasionally a wife may have to do without her husband's full attention. *w 6/1 20-22a*

Friday, July 13

They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.—John 17:14.

By obedience to the revealed truth of Jehovah's Word, both the remnant and the "great crowd" stand out as being "no part of the world" that does not adhere to God's truth. How inappropriate, therefore, it would be for us to use the world to the full! Being "no part of the world" calls for neutrality toward the controversies and politics of the world. We must also avoid spiritual fornication through friendship with the world. Moral and spiritual cleanness are required of us. To render clean and undefiled worship to Jehovah, then, we must 'keep ourselves unspotted from the world' by not adopting attitudes, speech and conduct common to sinful humankind alienated from God. We must remain free of the world's corruption, violence, unjust schemes, and so forth. Yes, the need to 'keep unspotted from the world' is another vital reason not to use the world so as to get out of it all we can.—Jas. 1:27. *w 10/15 14, 15a*

Saturday, July 14

Unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.—Matt. 24:22.

The "great tribulation" is to be "cut short" for the sake of Jehovah's elect ones. (Matt. 24: 21, 22) This means that a remnant of them are to survive the tribulation and be eyewitnesses of Jehovah's strange act by which he will vindicate his sovereignty. (Isa. 28:21) Since on their account the days of the tribulation are to be "cut short," it follows that some "flesh" will be saved through the end of this old world. If the chosen remnant will have Jehovah's protection assuring their survival, no less will the "great multitude" of dedicated, baptized and faithful ones survive under divine protection. (Rev. 7: 9, Authorized Version) Today the vast majority of Jehovah's Witnesses are members of that "great multitude" that is to survive "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." It is our privilege to make this good news known to all who will hear. —Rev. 16:14-16. *w 10/1 13a*

Sunday, July 15

Like a diamond, harder than flint, I have made your forehead.—Ezek. 3:9.

Today, in spite of the threat of nuclear war, the religious leaders of the world have not undergone a change of visage toward the Kingdom proclaimers. So the anointed remnant as Kingdom ambassadors and their dedicated, baptized associates out of all the nations have had to harden their own faces like a diamond in view of the stiffened religious opposition. They persist in speaking the

Word of God fearlessly. Particularly the clergy of Christendom and their parishioners should have understood the message and the counsel of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses draw what they have to say from the very same Bible that the religionists of the so-called Christian world claim to accept. It has proved to be just as Jehovah God said to Ezekiel: "The sons insolent of face and hard of heart . . . will certainly know also that a prophet himself happened to be in the midst of them."—Ezek. 2:4, 5. *w 12/15 7, 9, 10a*

Monday, July 16

We have heard that some from among us have caused you trouble with speeches, trying to subvert your souls, although we did not give them any instructions.—Acts 15:24.

Following Jesus' death, his faithful followers met with much opposition. And just as the opposers of Jeremiah and Jesus arose from within the Jewish nation, so with the establishment of the Christian congregation there was to be opposition from within. Although this had been foretold, it would still come as a great test to those walking in faithfulness. Nevertheless, Jehovah would prove to be with his people to deliver them, even as he had been with Jeremiah and Jesus. This internal opposition in the first century had its small beginnings. Some opposers may have felt that they had a right motive, but for one reason or another they became fighters against the truth. As noted above, such persons *within* the congregation were opposing the teachings of those charged with spreading abroad the light of truth. *w 3/1 8, 9a*

Tuesday, July 17

Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is, . . . continue considering these things.—Phil. 4:8.

Hating what is bad is, at best, only a negative approach to keeping holy and clean. We must also take positive steps. At all times we must be conscious of our spiritual need. (Matt. 5:3) How vital that we regularly feed on God's Word! (Ps. 119:105-112) We must take to heart the fine counsel at Philippians 4:8, filling our minds with clean, upbuilding things. Of great help is memorizing scriptures and the words of our Kingdom songs. These will then naturally come to mind during times of leisure, or at night when we may lie awake. (Ps. 63:6; 77:6) If we are conscious of our spiritual need, we will regularly attend congregation meetings, where we can incite one another to love and to fine works.—Heb. 10:23-25. *w* 5/1 15, 16b

Wednesday, July 18

This I say, brothers, the time left is reduced. Henceforth let . . . those making use of the world [be] as those not using it to the full; for the scene of this world is changing.
—1 Cor. 7:29-31.

Surely, a proper view of material riches, worldly fame and glory, and of worldly heroes is essential if we wish to remain holy to our God and avoid using the world to the full, even as it befits us as faithful witnesses of Jehovah God. We should not become engrossed in it because

(1) "the time left is reduced"; (2) the world as we know it is passing away; (3) our life should be centered on our precious relationship with Jehovah; (4) we should manifest God's spirit, not the world's; (5) we need to be "without spot from the world" (Jas. 1:27); and (6) we must remain holy to our God. We can do all of this only with Jehovah's aid. Since we have the marvelous Kingdom hope, we should not want to use the world to the full, as though all we have comes from it. *w* 10/15 5, 19-21a

Thursday, July 19

Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.—Prov. 16:18.

As we study God's Word we learn that Jehovah has always guided his servants in an organized way. And just as in the first century there was only one true Christian organization, so today Jehovah is using only one organization. (Eph. 4:4, 5; Matt. 24:45-47) Yet there are some who point out that the organization has had to make adjustments before, and so they argue: "This shows that we have to make up our own mind on what to believe." This is independent thinking. Why is it so dangerous? Such thinking is an evidence of pride, and the Bible warns as above. If we get to thinking that we know better than the organization, we should ask ourselves: "Where did we learn Bible truth in the first place? Would we know the way of the truth if it had not been for guidance from the organization? Really, can we get along without the direction of God's organization?" No, we cannot!—Compare Acts 15:2, 28, 29. *w* 1/15 19, 20a

Friday, July 20

By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves.—Gen. 22:18.

Paul says that the completion of the membership of the seed of Abraham "means riches to people of the nations." (Rom. 11:12) How much more is this so because such spiritual riches and blessings affect not just a few tens of thousands of non-Jewish anointed Christians but literally millions of "people of the nations" who are not of the symbolic olive tree. Christ Jesus is now enthroned in the heavens. He has gathered the members of the secondary seed into the Abrahamic-covenant family. It is not surprising, therefore, that the concluding part of the Abrahamic promise is already beginning to have fulfillment. Yes, a great crowd out of all nations are already blessing themselves. With full faith in the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God, they have joined themselves with the remnant and are rendering sacred service in his temple. May they continue to bring blessings upon themselves by means of the seed, on into the new system of things. *w* 8/15 17-19a

Saturday, July 21

Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked.
—Eph. 5:15, 16.

Most of us are chronically short of time. Why is this? John said: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) Satan's world keeps people so busy constantly that they have little opportunity to think, let alone study. We are no part of the world, but we certainly do feel the effects of its way of life. Using its

influence, Satan would like to keep us so busy that our service to God would be crowded out. Paul recognized this problem and so gave the Ephesians valuable counsel. If we fail to buy out time to do the will of Jehovah, the pressure of living in these wicked days is likely to cause our love to cool off. True, some Christians have heavy obligations or are sick and thus are quite limited as to what they can do in God's service. But whatever we can do should be done in a "whole-souled" manner.—Eph. 6:6. *w* 11/1 21-23a

Sunday, July 22

Speak the word of God fearlessly.—Phil. 1:14.

Our Yearbook reports 205 lands where the Kingdom good news is being preached. Those lands include people black, white, yellow, red and brown, also of various tribes, along with dialects. Since World War I the number of "kings" on thrones has been greatly reduced, but there are many other types of political rulers now in office. (Rev. 10:10, 11) Regardless of their official designation or their political cast, the message of Jehovah's Witnesses today involves and applies to all of them. The banning of our work in so many lands gives proof of this fact. So in spite of the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, which were set up as the means for advancing and maintaining a united world, the fearless proclamation of the Kingdom of God by Christ as the only hope for mankind has gone forward irresistibly. (Matt. 24:14) Such "good news of the kingdom" has not seemed "good" to world leaders, and so they oppose it. But we will continue to speak it fearlessly. *w* 12/15 9, 15, 16

Monday, July 23

You cannot be partaking of "the table of Jehovah" and the table of demons.—1 Cor. 10:21.

In the field of music spiritual perils do exist. For instance, many popular musicians are involved in the occult. Some openly admit that they worship Satan, and satanic influence often shows up in their music. But how can a Christian tell if demonic influence exists in certain music? It is sufficient in some cases to look at the cover of a record album. When listening to certain musical records, either unscriptural or demonic ideas may be absorbed by a mind left open to improper suggestion. A spiritually unguarded mind can leave you open to intrusion by the demons. Immorality and involvement with spiritism, the occult or anything demonistic have no proper place in the life of a faithful Christian. Then what should a Christian do if he discovers that he has musical recordings betraying demonic influence? Surely, he should destroy them, so as not to be sharers with the demons. *w 10/15 7-11*

Tuesday, July 24

If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work.—1 Tim. 3:1.

When we review the role of the elders in the Christian congregation today and see how the great majority are self-sacrificing and are taking the lead in a fine way, our hearts go out in gratitude to Jehovah for his having instituted this loving arrangement. Capable men, who appreciate spiritual values, make themselves available for service in the congregation. At the same time we want to com-

mend elders' wives who circumspectively avoid trying to draw out their husbands on confidential matters. They show respect for the elders and are an asset to the congregation. Regarding the elders themselves, Paul could say to Timothy the above. That "fine work" does not imply position, power and prestige, as in Christendom. It calls for selflessness, sacrifice and service. If you are a dedicated and baptized man who is not yet an elder, are you willing to reach out for that responsibility with a pure motive? *w 9/1 18, 19a*

Wednesday, July 25

These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.—Matt. 25:46.

Yes, the sheeplike ones will inherit the Paradise realm of the heavenly Kingdom. A "great crowd" of them will do so without ever dying off the face of the earth and needing a resurrection from the dead back to life on earth. What a wonderful way for them to be ushered as "righteous" ones "into everlasting life"! They will witness it when all the goatlike ones on earth are told to "depart into everlasting cutting-off." This will be during the "great tribulation," which will reach its peak of intensity in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" on the battlefield of Har-Magedon. (Rev. 7:14; 16:14-16) There the last of the cursed "goats" will be cut off from earthly life for all eternity. Those who today unqualifiedly take their stand in support of the Kingdom will not merely inherit its earthly Paradise but have a most exhilarating part in vindicating the universal sovereignty of Jehovah. *w 1/1 16, 17*

Thursday, July 26

If you strictly obey his voice and really do all that I shall speak, then I shall certainly be hostile to your enemies and harass those who harass you.—Ex. 23:22.

Sound loud the battle call! Let all valiant witnesses of Jehovah muster for duty! The war against the enemy is approaching a critical stage. The days are urgent. We cannot afford to lapse into easygoing attitudes or be lulled into thinking that the warfare has abated. That is what the enemy would have us think, for he knows his time is short. Therefore, we may expect the enemy to make a sudden onslaught in the hope of catching the fighters for truth unawares. (1 Thess. 5:1-6) Jehovah sees his faithful witnesses today as fighters engaged in a spiritual warfare that is rapidly moving on to a climax. When called for, Jehovah becomes a "manly person of war" whose right hand can shatter and throw down his enemies. (Ex. 15:3, 6, 7) His promise to ancient Israel who were to be led by his angel, as noted above, still stands. *w 3/1 1, 2*

Friday, July 27

Neither will the sun beat down upon them nor any scorching heat, because the Lamb . . . will shepherd them. . . . And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes.—Rev. 7:16, 17.

Though there will be hardships and persecutions as long as Satan is permitted to bring woe to this earth, the "great crowd" of devoted worshipers no longer feel any "scorching heat" of God's disfavor. Having made, and been granted, the request "for a good conscience," these dedicated, baptized publishers of the Kingdom good news serve

joyfully, as the Lamb guides them to "fountains of waters of life." Already the above promise is fulfilled toward them in the spiritual paradise. (1 Pet. 3:21) The remaining anointed ones on earth yet to be resurrected into the New Jerusalem have experienced the joy mentioned at Isaiah 65:19, and now Jehovah showers like blessings on the "great crowd" of "other sheep." (John 10:16) Surely, here is a "Foundation of Two-fold Peace,"—peace now among Jehovah's worshipers and extending on into the physical Paradise. *w 3/15 18, 19a*

Saturday, July 28

As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men.—Ps. 115:16.

Through Noah and his family our race was given a new start, in righteousness. This serves as a pattern for the near future. What it shows is that, just as they survived the end of the world in their day, so we can survive the end of this world into the new system of things that is so near at hand! Millions today on earth appreciate that the "new heavens" and the "new earth" are immediately ahead of us. (2 Pet. 3:13) They do not fear the end of the present old world, even though it is to take place as if in a fire enveloping both heaven and earth. They know from the reliable Word of the Creator of all things that our literal earth will survive just as it did at the finish of the first world in the days of Noah. The inspired psalmist made the above comment about our earth. Yes, "the sons of men" were made, not for heaven, but for the earth, and it is our privilege to make this truth known. *w 10/1 11-13*

Sunday, July 29

Put a mark on the foreheads of the men that are sighing and groaning.—Ezek. 9:4.

Who is the figurative 'man clothed in linen' who is marking more and more of these grieved persons, and how is he doing so? This marking work is not appreciated by the clergy of Christendom and has been violently opposed by them. It has therefore called for the exercise of great fearlessness for the marking work to be done. Yet it has gone forward with even greater impetus since 1935. It has been done by a class of Christians dedicated to Jehovah through Jesus Christ, and who were prefigured by the prophet Ezekiel, a priest of ancient Israel. He was the one that had the vision of the 'man clothed with linen who had the secretary's inkhorn at his side.' They are dedicated to the same God as Ezekiel was and so, like him, they are witnesses of Jehovah. However, particularly since 1935 this 'man' has been assisted in this marking work by an ever greater number of the 'other sheep.' Are you having a share therein? *w 12/15 2-4*

Monday, July 30

More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life.—Prov. 4:23.

Music has power. It can reach hearts and stir emotions. So, worldly anthems and marches are used to arouse patriotic fervor. Worldly schools have "fight" songs to inspire athletes. Advertisers use catchy tunes to sell products. Such evidence of music's power should put Christians on guard. Satan the Devil is also aware of music's great power, and he sometimes uses

it to affect the heart and lead people away from the pure worship of Jehovah. In this respect, therefore, loyal Christians need to heed the above counsel. We must be especially careful that the music we listen to does not lead us away from "the path of uprightness" and into debased, God-dishonoring conduct. (Ps. 27:11) Jehovah has been very generous in giving us the gift of music. But how often it has been misused! Therefore, in choosing music, we need to be very selective and discerning, lest our hearts are led astray. *w 10/15 3-5*

Tuesday, July 31

"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die." Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.
—1 Cor. 15:32, 33.

Satan undermines first, then turns unwary Christians from the path of righteousness. We, therefore, need to be on guard against the ideas and inclinations of this wicked world. Otherwise, how can we remain blameless in the midst of "a crooked and twisted generation"? (Phil. 2:15) If our associates are inclined toward the pleasure-seeking point of view, problems are sure to ensue. This is especially so if we are enticed to "move around in the tents of wickedness." (Ps. 84:10) The world likes what it has, including the enjoyment of boundless pleasure. The hedonistic view appeals to many people. This is the philosophy that pleasure is the sole or chief good in life and that one's duty is fulfilled in the gratification of pleasure-seeking instincts. This way of thinking can undermine our way of life. It is the thinking of many of our workmates and schoolmates. *w 8/15 12-15b*

Wednesday, August 1

The Scripture . . . declared the good news beforehand to Abraham.—Gal. 3:8.

Jehovah was the first Evangelizer, or bringer of good news. His first prophecy declared good news of deliverance for imperfect mankind by means of a promised "seed." (Gen. 3:15) Later, with Isaiah as his prophetic spokesman, God foretold that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as the principal One of that "seed," would "tell good news to the meek ones." (Isa. 61:1) So Jehovah purposed Christ to be a preacher of good news—an evangelizer. Jehovah has commissioned others to tell the good news. Mighty spirit creatures, angels, have shared in this divinely approved work. Interestingly, in both Hebrew and Greek the word "angel" literally means "messenger," and the word "evangelist" is derived from two Greek words that mean "good" and "angel" (or, "messenger"). For instance, God's angel was used to bear the good news to Abraham. That good news was to the effect that Abraham's lineage would produce the promised "seed." —Gen. 12:2, 3. *w 2/1 3, 4*

Thursday, August 2

Beloved one, you are doing a faithful work in whatever you do for the brothers . . . For it was in behalf of his name that they went forth, not taking anything from the people of the nations.—3 John 5, 7.

Gaius was doing "a faithful work," or a loyal thing, in receiving visiting brothers hospitably. This was especially noteworthy since they were strangers—individuals formerly unknown to their Christian host. Those hardworking Chris-

tian travelers were "not taking anything from the people of the nations." Like the apostle Paul, they evidently wanted to "furnish the good news without cost" by not placing a financial burden on those to whom they were preaching. (1 Cor. 9:18) By assisting them, these hospitable worshipers of Jehovah were playing a vital role in furthering the interests of Christianity. A similar spirit motivates Jehovah's Witnesses today, and they do "a faithful work" in extending hospitality to such fellow believers as traveling overseers sent out by the Society. *w 4/1 9, 10, 13a*

Friday, August 3

All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.—2 Tim. 3:12.

We do not seek martyrdom. However, we know that these words of Paul are true. Does this depress us? No, for we can meet persecution with endurance. (1 Cor. 4:12) To prepare for such suffering before it comes upon us we need to remember the Devil's aim—to destroy our relationship with Jehovah. May we never let that happen! We can also prepare for persecution if we reflect on why God permits it. He does so chiefly because of the issue of universal sovereignty, and also to test our loyalty. Hence, let us determine in advance that, with divine aid, we will be loyal upholders of Jehovah's sovereignty. Additionally, we can be prepared for persecution if the Kingdom hope is in our heart. Moreover, daily we need to build up our faith, courage and endurance. We must truly love Jehovah, and this calls for accurate knowledge of his Word. *w 5/1 1-4a*

Saturday, August 4

[They were] showing all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly.

—Phil. 1:14.

The fearlessness of speech as displayed by the anointed remnant till now has been due to Jehovah's living up to this promise: "Look! I have made your face exactly as hard as their faces and your forehead exactly as hard as their foreheads. . . . You must not be afraid of them, . . . for they are a rebellious house." (Ezek. 3:8, 9) Thus fortified, the remnant has served as a heartening example to the crowd of "other sheep" gathering to their side. As Jehovah's Witnesses, these "other sheep" have become as bold as a lion. The Witnesses do not imitate Babylon the Great. Hence, both inside and outside the lands of Christendom, they have brothers who are suffering in prisons because of their strict neutrality. This has not instilled fear into those Witnesses still free and unimprisoned, duplicating what was true in the case of Paul's Christian brothers in Rome. *w 12/15 13-15a*

Sunday, August 5

He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.—Rev. 21:4.

Real freedom has to include more than freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. For example, can any of those freedoms bring us freedom from sickness? Furthermore, no matter what measure of health a person may have, he is faced with the hard fact that sooner or later people grow

old and die. What can a person enjoy in the grave? The Bible answers: "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." That is why it also says: "A live dog is better off than a dead lion." (Eccl. 9:4, 5) For us to be free in the fullest sense of the word, we have to be rid of the bondage of imperfection, sickness and death. And, yes, along with that we need to be rid of poverty, oppression, crime and war. But who can give us freedoms like that? Only Jehovah God can, and he will by means of his Kingdom. It is our privilege to make these truths known. *w 4/15 1-3*

Monday, August 6

Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.—Heb. 5:14.

Christian parents and youths need to use properly trained perceptive powers to distinguish between right and wrong. They need to recognize and thoroughly reject the deceptive enticements of debasing music. As the "anything goes" moral code becomes more entrenched in this Devil-dominated world and its music, witnesses of Jehovah, young and old, must become ever more decisive in aligning their lives with the high standards of their heavenly Father. Never forget that music has power. It can affect the heart. Do you see yourself getting caught up in the spirit of questionable worldly songs? Then act promptly to safeguard your heart. If you are a youth, discuss the situation with your parents. Also, pray fervently to Jehovah for help by means of his holy spirit.—Luke 11:13; Gal. 5:22-24. *w 10/15 19, 20*

Tuesday, August 7

Let the husband render to his wife her due; but let the wife also do likewise to her husband. The wife does not exercise authority over her own body, but her husband does; likewise, also, the husband does not exercise authority over his own body, but his wife does.—1 Cor. 7:3, 4.

At Romans 13:7 Paul showed that not all "dues" are alike. The due required depends on the specific need or request of the individual. As to the marital due of one's wife, more than physical union is necessary, as researchers have well pointed out. A wife's emotional makeup as the "weaker vessel" requires that her husband be self-sacrificing and not merely concerned with his own satisfaction. (1 Pet. 3:7) Furthermore, being entertained by material that features sex can create an improper "sexual appetite" and lead to self-centeredness, making common and crude what should be beautiful. Avoid such material like the plague! (Col. 3:5) But patiently, through expressions of tender love, let husbands render their wives their full due. *w 6/1 16-18a*

Wednesday, August 8

If you will strictly obey my voice . . . you will certainly become my special property.—Ex. 19:5.

As loyal Christians let us hold to God's standards, feeding our minds on what is true and righteous, and holding appreciatively and loyally to the channel from which we first learned Bible truth. And let our young folks, rather than showing resentment for parental authority and leaving home early, appre-

ciate God's standards. Doing so, they are pleased to benefit from the Bible-based counsel and help that Christian parents can provide. (Col. 3:18-21) All of us, though, must bear in mind that it is so very easy to be led away from God's standards. In answer to God's words above, the Israelites enthusiastically responded: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." (Ex. 19:8) Yet how contrary was the course they took in the following years! Let us therefore accept and hold to Jehovah's standards, for such is truly the course of wisdom and happiness. *w 6/15 18, 19, 21, 22*

Thursday, August 9

And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.—John 10:16.

If today a dedicated, baptized disciple who was not begotten by Jehovah God to the heavenly inheritance with Christ died, as many have done since the gathering of Christ's "other sheep" began, what then? Because of his having exercised faith in the One who is "the resurrection and the life," he would be in a better position with respect to the new system of things right from his earthly resurrection onward, likely from its beginning. (John 11:25) This calls to mind Paul's words at Hebrews 11:35: "Men were tortured because they would not accept release by some ransom, in order that they might attain a better resurrection." Such a one would then be early available for special privileges of service under the heavenly Kingdom. In this way the resurrection hope with which he died will be realized, to God's glory! *w 7/1 15*

Friday, August 10

How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?—Gen. 39:9.

The things of the world that will soon pass away with it include "the desire of the flesh," which manifests itself in various ways, some of them wicked. (1 John 2:15-17) Worldly enticements to immorality are numerous and have at times had devastating effects even upon God's dedicated people. For instance, although the Israelites had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, thousands of them later were put to death because of having "immoral relations with the daughters of Moab." (Numbers, chapter 25; 1 Cor. 10:8) How this should move us to shun worldly enticements to immorality! Consider the fine example of Joseph. Repeatedly, his Egyptian master's wife urged him to have sexual relations with her. However, he staunchly refused. It is not said that the woman was so ugly that she would repel a man. Rather, Joseph fled from her presence because he did not want to sin against his righteous God.—Gen. 39:7-20. *w 10/15 15, 16b*

Saturday, August 11

You must prophesy again with regard to peoples and nations and tongues and many kings.—Rev. 10:11.

Whether John was able to fulfill his assignment of service of such a wide scope and in his old age, we have no inspired record. But what about those anointed ones whom John prefigured? This class is what fulfills his prophetic status and sees the commission to him carried out in full. The expression, "You must prophesy again," indicates that the free carrying out of his witness work was

being interfered with by his exile on Patmos. It is evident that what was said to him there was really meant for his modern counterpart. That being the case, we are obliged to ask: In how many lands and tongues are the Witnesses speaking the Word of God fearlessly as they endeavor to preach "this good news of the kingdom"? (Matt. 24:14) Our Yearbook shows that it is being done in 205 lands. Of course, the greater part of this work is being done by the "great crowd" who are assisting the John class. *w 12/15 13-15*

Sunday, August 12

To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.—Matt. 25:40.

The pastoral King, Jesus Christ, tells us how a person may be considered fit to be separated to the side of divine favor in contrast to the goatlike people. It is by doing good to those yet remaining on earth of the spiritual "brothers" of the reigning King, who are in line for a seat with him on his heavenly throne. The doing of such good things means that they approve of the Kingdom witnessing done by the spiritual "brothers" of the King. They give support to it in every way that they can, not being ashamed of these proclaimers of the good news of the Kingdom even when these are imprisoned, but trying to help them to get out of such confinement, as was the case back in the postwar year of 1919. More positively than that, they directly share with the remnant in preaching "this good news of the kingdom," just as Jesus foretold. They do this publicly and from house to house.—Matt. 24:14. *w 1/1 7, 14*

Monday, August 13

How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern.—Ps. 119:97.

What a fine way to feel about God's law! It is far more rewarding to serve Jehovah with an attitude like that than to have to keep forcing ourselves to do what we know is right. We need to develop a *desire* to do what is right, to do it because we *want* to. Satan would like to pressure us into losing our first love, for he is the greatest enemy of our spirituality. To oppose him, Paul urged the Ephesians to put on "the complete suit of armor from God." Included in that armor are four vital Christian features: truth, righteousness, faith and the hope of salvation. (Eph. 6:13-17) Of course, we learn about these features when we first come into the congregation. But metallic armor can become rusty if it is not maintained. Similarly, if we do not maintain these essentials, our spiritual armor will deteriorate and fail to protect us adequately. To prevent that, we must keep making God's law our concern all day long. *w 11/1 4, 5a*

Tuesday, August 14

The purpose is that you may . . . indeed prove to be holy to your God.—Num. 15:40.

Jehovah's people differ from the world as regards hopes, aspirations and compliance with the will of their holy God. They should prove holy to God. Accordingly, the people of ancient Israel were to make "fringed edges upon the skirts of their [robeline] garments." They were to do this so as not to be in style with Moabites, Egyptians or others and to be reminded that they were to be different

as Jehovah's people and that they should obey him, "proving holy to their God." (Num. 15:37-41) The desire to be 'holy to our God' should prompt us to be cautious in using the world. Worldly objectives involve wealth, fame and spiritually unwholesome activities that can undermine Christian faith. These can entice us to do wrong for selfish advantage, or cause us to esteem our own views above counsel from God's congregation. This surely is not the way to remain 'holy to our God.' *w 10/15 16, 17a*

Wednesday, August 15

This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ.—John 17:3, New International Version.

The example of our brothers who have kept strong in spite of being in violent areas should drive home to us that in violent times we must never forsake the gathering of ourselves together. (Heb. 10:24, 25) If this is so important in bracing ourselves against the violence of Satan's world, it is necessary also in gaining strength to cope with the more subtle machinations of the Devil. Our regular meeting attendance means life to us! In these terrible times, Satan seeks to subvert God's people by making them "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Tim. 3:4) Rather than imbibe Satan's spirit of violence and immorality, which is glorified by certain TV programs, some video games and the like, how important that we continue, through our personal study, meditation and our meetings, to take in and apply the knowledge that "means everlasting life"—John 17:3; Col. 1:9-11. *w 7/15 5-7a*

Thursday, August 16

Do all things for God's glory.

—1 Cor. 10:31.

At social gatherings it is important for there to be proper oversight. Otherwise, an air of permissiveness may seep in to spoil the occasion. If alcoholic drinks are served, is moderation observed? If music is played, is it the kind that mature Christians do not find objectionable? Is it in keeping with the words above? This strengthens our hand in the fight to counteract permissiveness. This is no time to be lulled into complacency. The erosion of adherence to Bible principles is gradual. Satan uses sly tactics to destroy our faith. We know that Jehovah will soon clear the air of permissive evil in all its forms. No longer will its foul influence exist. Those surviving the end of this wicked system will see the dawn of a beautiful New Order of righteousness upon this earth. Be determined to be among those who will enjoy that privilege. Fight to counteract this world's permissiveness by getting better acquainted with and applying the principles of God's Word. *w 8/15 19-21b*

Friday, August 17

I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind.—1 Tim. 2:9.

Do we need to make adjustments in our reading, recreation or certain circumstances so as to avoid sinning against God? If so, let us act without delay, as did Joseph. (Gen. 39:9) Then again, worldly thinking often fosters independence and pride. The world's emphasis on the material aspects of life extends to adornment, particularly significant to women who

desire to have a fine appearance. In ancient Judah, women who decked themselves with many ornaments came to grief with the Babylonian conquest in 607 B.C.E. What a difference in attitude there was between immodest Jezebel and modest, godly, though well-attired, Esther! (2 Ki. 9:30; Esther 2:7; 5:1) Obviously, Christian women wish to be like Esther. Hence, they attire themselves in harmony with Paul's inspired counsel. They make their principal adornment "the secret person of the heart."—1 Pet. 3:3-5. *w 10/15 16-18b*

Saturday, August 18

I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number.—Rev. 7:9.

Today there are well over 2.4 million regularly active in Jehovah's prescribed work for this conclusion of the system of things. And the ingathering of all those who will make up the final membership of the "great crowd" to its fullest extent is not yet over. It should increase! But at present the ratio is about one of the great crowd for every 2,000 people on earth. By now there should not be much left of the "one hour" during which the symbolic "ten horns" rule as kings with the United Nations organization. Reasonably, then, members of the "great crowd" can survive the approaching destruction of "the wild beast" and its "image." (Rev. 17:12; 13:14) Under Jehovah's protection they will survive the fiery end of this wicked system of things and enter into the righteous new system of things. There they will not swerve from the divinely marked way of life. Hence, Jesus Christ will become their Eternal Father.—Isa. 9:6, 7. *w 10/1 14, 15a*

Sunday, August 19

With every form of prayer and supplication . . . carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit.—Eph. 6:18.

If we keep in close contact with Jehovah by prayer, we will not lose our 'first love' for Jehovah, even though we have to endure many pressures or, like John, have served many years. Paul said in another letter: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." (Phil. 4:13) Most of us get tired from time to time. But Jesus' message to the Ephesian congregation shows that we can and must avoid losing the 'love we had at first.' (Rev. 2:4) As Jehovah helped the Ephesians by means of Paul, Timothy and others, he is helping us today through his organization. If, in turn, we train ourselves to enjoy study and meditation and brace up our mind for the fine activity of telling others what we learn, while praying to Jehovah for help to persevere in doing his will, then we are doing a fine work, and "we shall reap if we do not tire out."—Gal. 6:9. *w 11/1 24, 25a*

Monday, August 20

Many false prophets will arise and mislead many; and because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off.
—Matt. 24:11, 12.

It is in Christendom today that we find a bumper crop of immorality, divorce, broken families, drug abuse and crime of every kind. Christendom's religion has proved powerless to stay the growth of lawlessness. How well Jesus' words apply to its clergy! He declared: "Isaiah aptly prophesied about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honor me with

their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, because they teach as doctrines commands of men.' Letting go the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men." (Mark 7:6-8) Thus Christendom, the modern-day apostate "Jerusalem," together with all other "antichrists," faces "tribulation" from God when Christ is revealed from heaven to bring vengeance upon disobedient ones. It is our duty to sound the warning about these things.—2 Thess. 1:6-9. *w 3/15 11*

Tuesday, August 21

I am Jehovah. That is my name.
—Isa. 42:8.

The words "Creator" and "Almighty" call attention to certain aspects of God's activity. "Lord" refers to his authority. "God" describes him as having more than human attributes and power. One religious writer said: "The introduction of God's personal name into Christian worship and theology could have surprising and creative results." The various words that describe God—Lord, Almighty, the Creator—are correct. They are used in the Bible. However, there is a word that the Bible uses more often than any of these. It is God's personal NAME, and that name should remind us of all the things we know about him. That name, Jehovah, occurs in the original text far more often than does any other word for God. This name was not chosen by humans. The Bible says that God chose it, and that he said it should be used. (Ex. 3:15) When the Bible uses a name for God, this helps us to think of him not just as a force but as a personality. It helps us to draw closer to him. *w 12/1 3-6*

Wednesday, August 22

Instruct me, O Jehovah, in your way, and lead me in the path of uprightness on account of my foes. Do not give me over to the soul of my adversaries.
—Ps. 27:11, 12.

Truly, there is a wide variety of Scripturally acceptable and upbuilding music, including delightful Kingdom songs, now available on tapes, that are enjoyed by Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. So we are not missing anything worthwhile by rejecting music that debases. By a regular study of the Bible and related publications, may we train our perceptive powers to distinguish between right and wrong. Then let us cling to what is right. If any music conflicts with Jehovah God's righteous standards, reject it. Yield to his instruction and be firm in staying on "the path of uprightness." By all means, then, let us beware of music that debases! At the same time, may our personal choice of music be a praise to Jehovah God, who "furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment," making good use of our Kingdom songs at our meetings, as well as at other times.—1 Tim. 6:17.
w 10/15 22

Thursday, August 23

Like a diamond, harder than flint, I have made your forehead.—Ezek. 3:9.

God's inspired Word has not been blotted out, despite all human efforts to destroy it. Correspondingly, the preaching of that written Word of God needed someone to make it vocal and hearable. The fearless speaking of that Word of God has gone doggedly onward by Jehovah's Witnesses since the postwar year of 1919 by an increasing number of mouths, despite the attempts of the in-

furiated opposers to stifle the fearless speakers. Can there be any reason for doubt that Jehovah will continue to harden diamondlike the foreheads of his modern-day Ezekiel class and their courageous companions to face the hardheaded opposers till destruction suppresses their opposition? None at all! God has made the way of his witnesses successful until now. He will keep on making their way prosperous until all their prophesying has been completed. This he can be expected to do, to his own credit and to the vindication of his universal sovereignty. w 12/15 17, 18

Friday, August 24

Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.
—Matt. 25:34.

This invitation does not signify that these are to die and have a resurrection to life in heaven with the spiritual brothers of the King. He does not call them his "brothers." (Matt. 25:40) They are persons separated from the nations that are gathered before his throne. They look forward to being blessed by the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and his spiritual "brothers." So what they inherit is the earthly realm of the Kingdom, where Paradise is to be restored all around the globe. When Jehovah God made our earth he purposed for it to become a paradise everywhere, and he put man and woman on earth to make it that way, starting with the garden of Eden, or Paradise of Pleasure. The fall of Adam and Eve into sin and death did not deal out a defeat to God's purpose. (Isa. 55:11) He at once made preparation for bringing about the earth-wide Paradise by means of his Kingdom. w 1/1 15

Saturday, August 25

The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father with spirit and truth.—John 4:23.

Early Christians kept clear of Jewish sectarian strife. They knew that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were among Jesus' bitterest enemies. Christ's followers could share neither the Essenes' belief in the immortality of the soul nor their taste for a monastic, ascetic life. And as neutrals they certainly had nothing in common with the nationalistic Zealots. Rather, the Christians practiced the united, pure worship of the one true God, in keeping with Jesus' words above, addressed to a non-Jewish woman. Speaking for true Christians, the apostle Paul stated: "There is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him." (1 Cor. 8:6) True Christianity means united worship of the one God, the Father, Jehovah, through the one Lord, Jesus Christ. Yes, our Leader is Christ.—Matt. 23:10. w 9/15 6, 7a

Sunday, August 26

When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near.
—Luke 21:31.

In his prophetic word Jehovah speaks of the real hope. He caused Isaiah to foretell the birth of a son who becomes "Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6, 7) By what means will Jehovah's zeal bring about 'peace without end'? The Kingdom of God! There is the solution to mankind's problems. Down through the years, have we not been praying for that Kingdom to come? That is what Jesus in-

structed us to do. (Matt. 6:9, 10) The prophetic word tells us that now "the kingdom of God is near." But in what sense? God's prophet Daniel explains in Daniel 2:44. So the earth is not burned up by a nuclear holocaust that destroys all human life. Rather, God's Kingdom sweeps wicked men and nations off the face of our globe in preparation for a permanent earth-wide government on the shoulders of the "Prince of Peace." Yes, the prophecies of God's Word focus in on our day. They show us what lies immediately ahead. It is our privilege to make these truths known to others.—Rom. 15:4. w 11/15 14-17

Monday, August 27

Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.
—1 Cor. 15:33.

At times some have regretfully become involved with fellow employees. At many places of employment it is customary to hold office parties, celebrate birthdays and holidays. If a Christian does not fight to counteract permissiveness in such areas, an erosion process can get a start. Socializing with worldly persons on the job has led some Christians into dating, committing fornication and other wrongdoing. Permissive attitudes can develop also toward immoral television programs. Television has become the baby-sitter for many young ones, but often what is watched is not properly monitored by parents, this resulting in many problems. There are adults who have allowed their attention to be captured by soap operas or TV serials. Viewing of such programs can also mean a violation of the apostle Paul's injunction against bad association. w 8/15 15-17b

Tuesday, August 28

It is not those merely abundant in days that prove wise, nor those just old that understand judgment.—Job 32:9.

Did it follow that any older man in Israel would automatically be an "older man" in a judicial capacity? Would a certain age limit convert an Israelite into an "older man" in that sense? No, such a conclusion would not be reasonable. Elihu expressed matters clearly, as stated above. And the wise congregator wrote: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness." (Prov. 16:31) The Hebrew Scriptures clearly show that in the qualified "older man" old age and experience had to be allied with wisdom and a righteous course of conduct. However, age and experience are of great value. To qualify for privileges of service, older men must accept the guidance of God's spirit and acquire *understanding* of his Word. It is not enough to be able to quote scriptures. Knowing how to apply them wisely is the vital factor for an "older man." The same principles apply to elders in the congregation today. *w* 9/1 9, 10

Wednesday, August 29

Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah . . . Make me walk in your truth and teach me.—Ps. 25:4, 5.

Jehovah God himself said that "the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up." (Gen. 8:21) So at times we need to pray for a different attitude, a change of heart. For instance, if the world's allurements tug at our heart, we need to ask our heavenly Father to help us replace that yearning with spiritually wholesome desires. Centuries

ago, the psalmist David petitioned God as above. Jehovah did this for David, and surely He can answer such a prayer for His present-day servants. Since Jehovah's "ways" and "truth" are not worldly, prayerful sentiments like David's may be helpful if this world's ways seem particularly appealing to us. The world holds immoral views and is rife with wickedness. Often this is apparent in worldly songs, dances, books, movies, television programs, and the like. If these appeal to us, we should pray for Jehovah's help so that we no longer desire these things. *w* 10/15 5-7b

Thursday, August 30

This was to the end that now . . . there might be made known through the congregation the greatly diversified wisdom of God.—Eph. 3:10.

We are known internationally as evangelizers, that is, messengers of good news. As an English sociologist once stated: "The Witnesses are among the most assiduous and energetic evangelisers and proselytisers in the modern world. This is an obvious, albeit often neglected, reason for the Watchtower movement's growth-rate." But is the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work pleasing to Jehovah? History and present-day facts answer Yes! Evangelism, preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom, is the underpinning of Christianity. It is the mark, past and present, of God's people. What does Kingdom preaching accomplish? For one thing, it enables a person visibly to display love and appreciation for the Almighty God and His human creation. And most importantly, through evangelism Jehovah's unmatched wisdom and remarkable power are made known to others. *w* 2/1 1, 2

Friday, August 31

Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head.—Matt. 8:20.

Even if the spirituality of the Christian who puts undue emphasis on material things is not entirely choked, does it mean that the subtle advances by wicked spirits have not been successful? (Luke 8:14) No, for consider how that person's materialistic course can affect others in the congregation. For example, when younger, impressionable members of the

Saturday, September 1

It came to be in my mouth like honey for sweetness.

—Ezek. 3:3.

The Kingdom message that we still keep on proclaiming is a challenging one. We have had an experience like that of the prophet Ezekiel, when he was a captive in the land of Babylon, some years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E. Like the apostle later on the isle of Patmos, Ezekiel was given a "roll of a book." The prophet tells us: "It was written upon in front and on the back; and there were written in it dirges and moaning and wailing." (Ezek. 2:9, 10) After obeying God's instructions to eat this "roll of a book," Ezekiel commented as above. Today, for any of us to have the Word of God put in our mouth so as to serve as his message-bearers is a sweet privilege, regardless of all the contents of that Word, even dirges, moaning and wailing. We prize the revealed Word of God. It has strengthened us, just as literal honey strengthened Jonathan. —1 Sam. 14:26, 27. *w* 12/15 5a

congregation see another Witness exerting himself to make a lot of money and get nice things, are they thereby encouraged to seek first God's Kingdom? What have you observed? Is it not true that, upon observing the apparent advantages of having material things, newer ones in the truth are inclined also to pursue materialistic goals, perhaps to their own spiritual disaster? We need to keep in mind Christ's example. He could have lived in great wealth and luxury, but did he? The above answers. *w* 1/15 5, 6, 8a

Sunday, September 2

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion.—2 Pet. 3:11.

What shall we prospective survivors of the end of this world do? That is a good question. More than 1,900 years ago Peter showed what should be the answer to that question, when he wrote the above. If it was fitting for him to write those words 1,900 years ago, how much more appropriate it is for those words of exhortation to be addressed to us during these final days of this system of things. In the closing days before the end of the pre-Flood world, "Noah was a righteous man. . . . Noah walked with the true God." (Gen. 6:9) Noah's walking that way as the head of his small family worked for their being kept alive by the God with whom he walked. Even as Noah was given ample warning of the Flood, so no less have Jehovah's Witnesses of this 20th century been given warning of this world's end and are letting others know about it. *w* 10/1 14-17

Monday, September 3

It is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never drift away.

—Heb. 2:1.

'Drifting away' from the truth is a real danger. Consider how that might occur. A person—it could be any of us—became a Christian and was admirably filled with enthusiasm. He readily shared in the field ministry even when he had only limited Biblical knowledge. After some years his excitement should have matured into ardent zeal and deep devotion. Has it? Does he view the Christian ministry as a means to display his love for God and to aid others, as he himself was aided? Or has it become a routine, a chore? If he has children, does he regularly and enthusiastically urge them to be full-time ministers? Or does he mention it only casually and with less conviction than what he says about their getting advanced schooling, having a high-paying job or acquiring an elegant home? A step to avoid drifting away is our 'paying more than the usual attention to the things heard.' w 2/15 11, 12a

Tuesday, September 4

From among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.

—Acts 20:30.

Today we see that there have been some from among us who have sought to tear down the good work done by Jehovah's people worldwide. Some have become jealous, quarrelsome, filled with selfish ambition, often wanting to make a name for themselves. They may have become "murmurers, complainers about their lot in life, pro-

ceeding according to their own desires." (Jude 16) All of this can lead to doubts, strife and division among God's people. In their faultfinding, such ones lose sight of the God-given and all-important work of Christians, namely, to be "doers of the word," accomplishing what Jehovah has commanded to be done by faithful followers of his Son, Christ Jesus. (Jas. 1: 22-25; Matt. 28:19, 20) The purpose of such opposers is to undermine the faith of Jehovah's people, to draw away disciples after themselves, even as Paul warned above. w 3/1 12, 13a

Wednesday, September 5

Beloved one, I pray that in all things you may be prospering. . . . For I rejoiced very much when brothers came and bore witness to the truth you hold.

—3 John 2, 3.

The apostle could be joyful because his friend Gaius was faring well spiritually and holding to the truth. (Prov. 15:30; 25:25) The "brothers" may have been part of the congregation with which Gaius was associated or those who may have gone from Ephesus to visit that congregation, perhaps even carrying an earlier letter the apostle had written. These brothers 'bore witness to the truth Gaius held.' He had fully accepted the truth as it related to Christ and was abiding by Jehovah's requirements. Gaius was "walking in the truth," loyally holding to the entire body of Christian teachings. Indeed, every faithful witness of Jehovah must not only be 'in the truth' but must also walk in it as a way of life. Loyal Christians always conform to "the truth," rejecting apostasy and actively serving God with a complete heart. w 4/1 4, 6, 7a

Thursday, September 6

They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears . . . , neither will they learn war anymore.—Mic. 4:3.

What a joy it will be to live no longer under divided human rule committed to huge armed forces and constant wars! No more wasting of earth's resources for destruction. Instead, those resources will be used for peaceful, constructive purposes. In fact, those whom God will preserve alive through the coming end of the present system of things will already have fulfilled the above prophecy. Who, today, among all of earth's peoples already fulfill that prophecy? The record of modern history shows that it is Jehovah's Witnesses. They are living testimony to the fact that earth-wide peace under God's rule is going to be a reality because earth-wide peace is a reality among them now! In God's New Order peace will be extended to every part of the earth. (Isa. 32:17, 18) Imagine having such security that you will not even have to lock your doors! w 4/15 7, 8a

Friday, September 7

Let those who are suffering in harmony with the will of God keep on commending their souls to a faithful Creator while they are doing good.

—1 Pet. 4:19.

As Jehovah's dedicated witnesses, we know that Satan desires to destroy our relationship with Almighty God. By God's undeserved kindness, however, we will not compromise our faith. Rather, we will bear in mind the great issue and seek in every way to uphold Jehovah's universal sovereignty.

Confident in the Kingdom hope, we can be happy though persecuted. We are prepared to meet persecution with endurance, for we trust implicitly in Jehovah. (Eph. 3:20, 21) Therefore, let us be fearless before the foe, maintaining integrity, to God's glory and our own salvation. May we "hope in Jehovah and keep his way." (Ps. 37:34) As we endure persecution, may we manifest the attitude evident in the apostle Peter's words above. Our "faithful Creator" will not fail us. In his strength, we can be happy though persecuted and can meet persecution with endurance. w 5/1 19, 20a

Saturday, September 8

Everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.—John 11:26.

Armageddon will signify the end of this system of things. Among those who will escape death then will be the "great crowd." At Revelation 7:9-17 these were forevisioned as coming alive "out of the great tribulation" and entering into the Millennial system of things on earth. Why should these ever need to die off the earth? Under the reign of Christ they will be afforded the opportunity of gaining endless life in Paradise. Yes, there will be an unnumbered "great crowd" out of the many nations and languages. For such men of faith it will be more thrilling to step out into the post-Har-Magedon system of things than it was for Noah and his family to step out of the ark after the Deluge. In the case of those modern men of faith, the words of Jesus above will be true in a very literal sense. They will want to have their names "written in the book of life." —Rev. 20:7-15. w 7/1 19, 20a

Sunday, September 9

Also, in all the nations the good news has to be preached first.
—Mark 13:10.

Now, since Jehovah's Witnesses are seeing the unfolding sign of the conclusion of the system of things, what course of action should they obediently take? That course by which they will have a share in the fulfillment of that outstanding feature of the sign that Jesus foretold in the above words. In the year following the end of World War I, the surviving remnant of the Israel of God began obediently carrying out that prophetic command. As a result, today, in 205 lands and in some 180 languages "the good news" is being preached by the remnant of spiritual Israelites and their companion witnesses of Jehovah. All of this despite persecution and World War II. By this irrepressible witness to the established Kingdom, the Gentiles, "the nations," are being given to understand that their "times," their "seven times," for trampling upon Jerusalem ended in the autumn of 1914. The Jerusalem here involved is the celestial Jerusalem.—Luke 21:24. *w 8/1 13, 14a*

Monday, September 10

Abhor what is wicked, cling to what is good.—Rom. 12:9.

If we, as dedicated Christians, are drawn to unwholesome, worldly entertainment, then what? First, we will do well to appraise entertainment possibilities in the light of God's Word. Paul, in the above words, shows what we should do. Then we should pray for Jehovah's help so that our heart, imperfect though it is, will cease to desire vile things. Surely, our God can 'create in us a

pure heart' if we sincerely ask him to do so. (Ps. 51:10) After the gravity of his sin with Bath-sheba had been dramatically impressed upon David, he pleaded with Jehovah: "Do not throw me away from before your face; and your holy spirit *O do not take away from me.*" (Ps. 51:11) God answered that prayer. But note that the holy spirit can be lost or withdrawn. If we, as dedicated Christians, permit the world to draw us back into its "low sink of debauchery," we may drown there spiritually. (1 Pet. 4:4) To avoid that, we must heed Paul's counsel above. *w 10/15 7-9b*

Tuesday, September 11

You must guard yourselves respecting your spirit.

—Mal. 2:16.

To be truly attentive to your wife takes time and thought. Some husbands find it easier to become attentive to someone else who seems new and exciting. Jehovah said the above to such self-centered men who were dealing treacherously with their wives. Yes, these needed to guard, to watch out for, their feelings. Because we may work or live close to other women, we must do the same. It takes a conscious effort and self-discipline to prevent egotism, boredom or curiosity from changing your inner feelings toward your wife. (Matt. 5:27-30) Your self-sacrifice is especially necessary with the marital due. Problems abound in this sensitive relationship. Some research studies have shown that one half of all couples will experience a serious sexual problem at some time during their marriage. Many husbands often equate their wife's needs or sexual due with their own. But such is not at all the case. *w 6/1 15-17a*

Wednesday, September 12

Now that you have come to know God, . . . how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things and want to slave for them over again?—Gal. 4:9.

Christians face the danger of turning away from the light. Paul warned that men would arise in the congregation and draw away disciples. (Acts 20: 29, 30) In fact, this happened even while he was on earth. More to the point, some in our time have turned away. Might that happen to us? Few Christians today would willingly choose darkness over light. So what sort of things might induce a Christian to turn away? Some insight is provided in what Paul wrote as noted above. True, likely few of us feel in danger of turning back to "the weak and beggarly elementary things" of Greek philosophy or of the Law. Yet that counsel was put in the Bible for our benefit too. There is, for example, the possibility of turning back to what 1 John 2:16 terms "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." *w 6/15 6, 7, 11a*

Thursday, September 13

Rescue me, O Jehovah, from bad men.—Ps. 140:1.

The Scriptures and the facts make it plain that it is inadvisable for us as Christians to carry, or have in our possession at home or in other locations, a firearm or other lethal weapon for use against human attackers or intruders. One who prepares for violence invites violence. Rather, the Christian's main trust should be in Jehovah his God. In line with Romans 13:1, 4, the worldly "superior authorities" may set up

certain peace-keeping agencies, such as police, that are armed officially to protect citizens and property. Since such arrangements permitted by God are described as "God's minister, an avenger to express wrath upon the one practicing what is bad," it would be in order for the Christian to request and receive protection from such an agency. But even if he finds it necessary to defend himself or his loved ones by whatever is at hand, he should not use firearms. Nor would he take the law into his own hands. *w 7/15 11, 12a*

Friday, September 14

He that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly.—Prov. 13:20.

We should not deceive ourselves into thinking that bad associations, wrong entertainment and overindulgence in alcoholic beverages cannot ensnare us and destroy our spirituality. Think of what happened to the Israelites on the plains of Moab. (Num. 25:1-9) Recall what happened to Dinah, daughter of Jacob. (Gen. 34:1, 2, 7, 25-31) Even Solomon permissively took to himself pagan wives who influenced him to do what was bad in Jehovah's eyes. (1 Ki. 11:1-6) What point do we get from these Bible examples? It was not an immediate frontal attack by the Devil that brought about the downfall of some of the true worshippers. But with their permissive thinking the Devil was able gradually to turn some of them from the path of righteousness. Satan uses similar tactics today. Seeds of permissiveness often are sown and nurtured as a result of circulating among and having association with unwholesome companions. *w 8/15 8-13b*

Saturday, September 15

Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.—Matt. 10:28.

The prophet Ezekiel of old had to muster up great courage in order not to fear the Israelite opposers of his day. But Almighty God made the promise that he would make the face of Ezekiel just as hard as the faces of his antagonists, yes, even harder. So he should not be afraid of his merely human opposers. (Ezek. 2:4; 3:8) Likewise, the remnant of spirit-anointed Christians that makes up the class prefigured by the man clothed with linen and with the inkhorn at his side need to trust in the God of Ezekiel to harden their faces to confront unflinchingly the hard-set countenances of opposers inside and outside Christendom. Nineteen centuries ago Jesus sent forth his disciples on an errand of speaking the Word of God fearlessly in their own country. Before dispatching them, he said the above. Whether we are of the anointed remnant or we are of the "great crowd," we can draw comfort from those words. *w 12/15 7, 8*

Sunday, September 16

Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time? —Luke 12:42.

The clergy of Christendom were not found to be distributing proper spiritual "food supplies" to Christ's "body of attendants." Therefore, these clerics and their flocks are spiritually "hungry." (Isa. 65:11, 13) On the other hand, "the faithful steward" has kept up an abundance of "food supplies at

the proper time" for individual anointed Christians, and, since 1935, for a growing "great crowd" of "other sheep." (Rev. 7:9, 10; John 10:16) Regardless of language or geographical location, all these witnesses of Jehovah follow the same worldwide study program based on God's Word. This has done much to promote unity among them and to maintain it. The unity of over 46,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in over 200 lands is also maintained through their Scriptural organizational methods. *w 9/15 19-21a*

Monday, September 17

Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you. —1 Tim. 4:16.

A simple help in this respect is to keep a neat and tidy personal library. An elder especially needs to have quick access to accurate Scriptural information, and that means making regular use of Watch Tower publication indexes. This is important because life and salvation can be involved in an elder's counsel. For example, in matters affecting abortion, blood transfusions and Christian neutrality an elder can have a profound effect for good or for bad on his own conscience and that of others, as well as on people's relationship with Jehovah. Therefore, we can see that it is not wise to try to answer questions when we are not absolutely sure of the Bible principles involved. Counsel lacking a sound Scriptural basis could cause irreparable damage, even as indicated by Paul's words at Philippians 1:9, 10. *w 9/14 14, 15a*

Tuesday, September 18

Those who dwell on the earth will wonder admiringly, but their names have not been written upon the scroll of life. —Rev. 17:8.

Whose name will be found written on "the scroll of life"? Yours? Mine? The rest of that verse gives a timely warning. Since 1945 a perilous situation prevails that might affect the seeker after life eternal on a Paradise earth. He may be deceived into taking a course that will disqualify him for having his name written on "the scroll of life." Hence, we now need to exercise "the intelligence that has wisdom" in our attitude toward the symbolic "wild beast." Those who do not want to die off our earth will not worship "the image of the wild beast." (Rev. 17:9; 13:14, 15) Battle lines are now being drawn up. "The ten horns" are poised for attack. Revelation 17:12-14 indicates that the remnant will face attack by "the ten horns." But though few in number, they are not afraid. Neither are their companions, the "great crowd," who will survive "the great tribulation," afraid.—Rev. 7:9, 14. *w 10/15 6, 8-10a*

Wednesday, September 19

God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap. —Gal. 6:7.

We should not overlook the worldly spirit of wild abandonment often associated with today's music and musicians. Obviously a Christian should not be in such company. At these worldly performances alcohol and drugs are usually taken in freely. Additionally, the music and actions of the performers engender a spirit of wild abandonment. Clearly, the type of music played on such occasions,

along with elements including demonism, drugs and violence, can only be debasing. Could a Christian, then, listen to the same music in his own home without being affected detrimentally? Hardly! And no faithful witness of Jehovah will ignore the Bible principle stated above. For example, how can he dance to catchy music if the words of the song urge him, over and over again, to go and commit fornication? And such morally debased lyrics are not limited to rock and disco music. They are also found in some country music. *w 10/15 12-15*

Thursday, September 20

The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it? I, Jehovah, am searching the heart, examining the kidneys, even to give to each one according to his ways, according to the fruitage of his dealings. —Jer. 17:9, 10.

The day-to-day problems of living in a non-Christian world can dim the joy of one of Jehovah's Witnesses. With the passing of time, the truth may cease to be fresh and exciting. It may even occur that, as time erases the memory of what it was like to be in the world, a Witness may look longingly at the so-called freedom, the lack of responsibility, that worldly people have. (Eph. 2:11, 12) Or a Witness may become worn down by the attitude of the people around him. He may develop the idea that it is more reasonable to take it a little easier in God's service, to slow down somewhat, thus becoming ensnared by his selfish heart. Something like that must have happened to the Ephesian Christians, as noted from Revelation 2:5. May such not happen to us. *w 11/12, 23*

Friday, September 21

I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning, your minds might be corrupted away from the sincerity and the chastity that are due the Christ.—2 Cor. 11:3.

Yes, Satan continues to use cunning and craftiness. He constantly presents tempting diversions, subtly trying to interest us in things that eventually will inhibit our spirituality. His aim is to weaken us so that we gradually leave Jehovah, or so that a frontal attack may succeed in breaking our integrity to God. Satan's methods can be compared with those of a fisherman who uses lures to catch fish. The fisherman experiments to find out which lure will appeal to the fish. Of course, when the fish bite they do not realize that there is a hook behind the lure. How about us? Are we aware of the lures Satan uses? Do we fully appreciate the consequences of getting hooked? Do not be deceived! Satan and his demons are real enemies out to get us! So never forget the whole world is lying in his power. *w 1/15 10, 11*

Saturday, September 22

Jehovah has a day of vengeance, a year of retributions for the legal case over Zion.—Isa. 34:8.

At Isaiah 34:5-7 Jehovah pronounces judgment against the people of Edom. Edom was a longtime enemy of the nation of Israel. And it has its modern-day counterpart. What is that? Well, who has taken the lead in reviling and persecuting the 20th-century spiritual Israel? Has it not been apostate Christendom, through its proud clergy class? Not only did the clergy of both sides give whole-

hearted support to both world wars but they added to their bloodguilt by causing worldly governments to ban and even to kill Jehovah's Witnesses, who on earth represent the heavenly Jerusalem, or Zion. God therefore declares the above against her. How does this affect modern "Edom"? In a devastation, as the following verses at Isaiah 34:9-17 show. We have separated from the spiritually defunct modern-day Edom. It is our duty to help sheeplike lovers of truth also to separate from modern Edom. *w 11/15 11, 12a*

Sunday, September 23

The praise of Jehovah my mouth will speak; and let all flesh bless his holy name . . . even forever.—Ps. 145:21.

God's name should remind us of his works and his loving-kindness. He did great things "for the sake of his name," to help us appreciate that he is God, that he has the right to tell us what to do, and that we can have *absolute confidence* in the accomplishment of his promises, even as he assures us at Isaiah 46:9-11. (Ps. 106:8) Centuries earlier Joshua had expressed like confidence, as recorded at Joshua 23:14. Surely knowledge of the things Jehovah has done produces faith. Faith prompts us to action. We use his name, speak of his deeds, offer ourselves willingly as his servants, and we look forward to the fulfillment of his great and unending purpose to rid the earth of wickedness and to establish righteous new conditions for obedient mankind. Having such faith, and acting upon it, what will we do? We will make use of every opportunity to witness about Jehovah's name and Kingdom. *w 12/1 18, 19, 21*

Monday, September 24

Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.—Luke 21:24.

These "appointed times" have been fulfilled. The very context of Jesus' prophecy at Luke 21 indicates how this must be. Do we not see all around us today the very things that Jesus there foretold—"nation rising against nation" in hot and cold wars, earthquakes, pestilences, food shortages, and men becoming faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth? Yes, the ending of the "times of the nations" is tied in with these world-shaking events that have exploded on earth from the year 1914 onward! (Luke 21:7-11, 24-26) It was no mere coincidence that Jehovah's people had been pointing forward to 1914 throughout the 35 years preceding that date. They understood that the "seven times" of Daniel's prophecy, chapter 4, would run out in 1914, this marking the end of the Gentile nations' rule over the earth without interruption by God. *w 3/15 12, 13*

Tuesday, September 25

I saw, and, look! a white horse; and the one seated upon it had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to complete his conquest.—Rev. 6:2.

The facts show that it has remained for us of this exciting century to enter into the happiness to which the apostle John pointed forward as recorded at Revelation 1:3. And so for our happiness we consider the above words. The white horse signified a righteous and pure carrier, swift in movement like

a literal horse. The rider of this speedy means of travel signified a newly installed king, for a royal crown was given him. He was a warrior king, for he was armed with a bow. Furthermore, he rode forth conquering, even down to the last opponent of his Kingdom to be put under him as conquered. It was to be a complete victory! In line with that, a long sword was given to him, a royal implement of warfare. Who has been fulfilling this role in our 20th century? Jesus Christ, even as seen from Psalm 45:6, 7 and Hebrews 1:8, 9. *w 5/15 6, 11, 13*

Wednesday, September 26

Repudiate ungodliness and worldly desires.—Titus 2:12.

Jehovah God deserves to be worshiped in a clean, upright way by all those dedicated to him. At all times and in every way, they should honor him in word and deed. They certainly must not have this world's spirit—its sinful and selfish, often corrupt, dominant feeling or activating force. As Jehovah's Witnesses, we must stand out as being different from this world. We must wholeheartedly apply divine instruction such as that given above. Sadly, however, not all those claiming to love Jehovah have always honored him and given clear evidence that they have rejected worldly desires or ways. It is reported that certain dedicated Christian men attended a masquerade party dressed as women. Could such behavior be considered an honor to Jehovah? Surely, actions of that kind are not what we would expect of those who are no part of the world. Why, under most circumstances such apparel would not only appear effeminate but also have homosexual overtones. *w 10/15 1, 2b*

Thursday, September 27

Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly.—1 Pet. 5:2.

Certainly, by the seventh decade of the Common Era spiritual qualifications had been established for those older men who would take the lead in the Christian congregation. Thus we find ample references to these in the writings of the apostles Peter and Paul. For example, Peter wrote as above. Logically, when Peter stressed that the "older men" were to serve not "for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly," he was echoing the counsel given Moses as found at Exodus 18:21. Paul, in his letter to his trusted collaborator Titus serving on the Mediterranean island of Crete, instructed him to "correct the things that were defective" in the congregations and to "make appointments of older men in city after city." (Titus 1:5-9) The Greek word for "older men" implies a "mature man, suitable by his experience and prudence for the ruling of his family or people." *w 9/1 14, 15*

Friday, September 28

God knows that in the very day of your eating from it your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad.—Gen. 3:5.

Yes, from the very outset of his rebellion Satan called into question God's way of doing things. To this day, it has been his subtle desire to infect God's people with this independent thinking. How is it manifested? A common way is by questioning the counsel provided by God's visible organization. For example, counsel has from time to time been given, warning

about listening to certain types of immoral and suggestive music, and about frequenting discos and other types of worldly dance halls where such music is played and people are known to engage in immoral conduct. (1 Cor. 15:33) Yet certain ones have professed to know better. They have rebelled against such counsel and have done what is right in their own eyes. With what result? Very often they have become involved in sexual immorality and have suffered severe spiritual harm. *w 1/15 20, 21*

Saturday, September 29

[Do] not [be] shifted away from the hope of that good news which you heard, and which was preached in all creation that is under heaven.—Col. 1:23.

The first-century Christians spread the good news with a sense of urgency. This feature of the good news identified the early Christians, even as noted by secular authorities. Regularly congregations were exhorted about the nearness of the end and their need to be ready. The apostles perceived that evangelizing with dispatch was a necessary part of Christianity if all the people were to be reached before God's day of vengeance arrived. As a result, Christianity mushroomed. Even though the clear ring of the Kingdom message was muffled and distorted after the first century, the expectation of the end remained a strong force. Therefore, it can be said that the evangelistic work started by Jesus Christ has had far-reaching and long-lasting effects. Although the evangelistic thrust was not always directed as Christ instructed, still its impression on the world was major. *w 2/1 13-16*

Sunday, September 30

Lay hold on the hope set before us.—Heb. 6:18.

You may have become one of Jehovah's Witnesses recently and are zealously sure of your convictions. Or you may have been a Christian witness for decades and feel solid in the way of the truth. In either case, likely each of us can call to mind some people we know who have ceased walking in the way of the truth. Some may gradually have lost their faith, become preoccupied with material interests or given in to tempta-

Monday, October 1

Put up a hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones.—Jude 3.

Some who once served with us have rejected various Scriptural views based on the teachings of Christ and his apostles. They deny that we are living in the "last days," despite overwhelming evidence that we are. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) These apostates 'have gone out from among us because they were not of our sort.' (1 John 2:18, 19) Hence, they no longer have fellowship with loyal anointed witnesses of Jehovah and their companions, and therefore these self-seeking heretics have no sharing with the Father and the Son, no matter how much they may boast of having intimacy with God and Christ. Instead, they are in spiritual darkness. Lovers of light and truth must take a firm stand against these promoters of false teaching. In no way do we want to be accomplices in the wicked deeds of such unfaithful persons by supporting their ungodly words and activities. Rather, we will heed the words of Jude above. *w 4/1 19*

tion and sinned. How can we prevent that from happening to us? By reflecting on the counsel in the book of Hebrews. How appropriate it is for our time can be seen by the faithful endurance of many Witnesses who have been strengthened by such counsel. All who would, like them, endure must heed Paul's words above. We must also take to heart Jehovah's counsel in Hebrews as to the dangers of 'drifting away,' 'falling away,' 'becoming sluggish,' 'shrink[ing] back to destruction' or 'begg[ing] off.'—Heb. 2:1; 6:6, 12; 10:39; 12:25. *w 2/15 1-5a*

Tuesday, October 2

It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.—Dan. 2:44.

No, God is not going to reform this corrupt world. It is far beyond recovery. So if anyone says that if some particular human scheme were to be followed, then the world would solve its problems, we do not believe it. God's Word truthfully shows that the miserable experiment of some 6,000 years of human rule independent of God is now deep into its last days. The rule of God's heavenly Kingdom will mean having only one government for all the earth. Its chief Administrator will be Jesus Christ, and with him a relatively small group of other faithful servants of God taken from the earth to serve as associate rulers. Think of what one government, ruled by God's laws and principles, will mean for the earth! All boundary lines that now divide nations into hostile factions will fall. People will be united into one grand human family, free to move about the entire earth without hindrance. *w 4/15 2-4a*

Wednesday, October 3

The form of worship that is clean and undefiled . . . is . . . to keep oneself without spot from the world.—Jas. 1:27.

Keeping spiritually clean presents a challenge to Christians because, to begin with, there are Satan and his demons. Are they not unclean, corrupt? Yes, indeed! The demons are referred to as "unclean spirits." (Matt. 10:1) Secondly, Satan's visible organization is our foe. Without question, his religious world empire is spiritually unclean. So is the rest of the world lying in his power. (1 John 5:19; Rev. 16:13; 17:4; 18:2) For our worship to be acceptable to God, therefore, we must heed the above counsel of the disciple James. Unclean, too, are many things presented in worldly newspapers, magazines, television programs and motion pictures. For instance, the makeup of many television programs is getting more unclean with the passing of time. Years ago, unclean movies were the exception; today they are the rule. Pornographic magazines keep proliferating like mushrooms.—2 Tim. 3:1-5. *w* 5/1 9-11b

Thursday, October 4

You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with [your wives] according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one.—1 Pet. 3:7.

A husband must have knowledge of his wife's emotional makeup, which is basically why she is considered the weaker vessel. *A wife must sense that she is loved and cherished by her husband.* Without this one ingredient—despite what material goods she has—she will feel inadequate.

She must be convinced that her husband feels as did the one who said to his wife: "There are many daughters that have shown capableness, but you—you have ascended above them all." (Prov. 31:28, 29) 'My wife should know I love her. I married her, didn't I?' may be the thinking of some men. Women, however, thrive on expressed affection. The faithful man Isaac was sensitive to this need. After 35 years of marriage he was seen showing affection to his wife. (Gen. 26:8) Do likewise. By the *attention* you give, let her know that your heart is with her. *w* 6/1 13, 14a

Friday, October 5

The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever.—1 John 2:17.

Indeed, "the world as we know it is passing away." (1 Cor. 7:31, *The Jerusalem Bible*) John made a similar point as noted above. John evidently meant that unrighteous human society was due to pass away by divine destruction, even as the ungodly pre-Flood world perished. Of course, with unrighteous people will go the present framework of things and everything it offers. Even as righteously disposed humans survived the Deluge, so Jesus showed that some will survive the rapidly approaching "great tribulation." (Matt. 24:21, 22) Already forming is "a new earth," a society of people who will live on this earth under Kingdom rule. So if we personally have the hope of survival and of eternal life in the New Order, why should we devote most of our time and energy to the passing old world? Rather, let us heed John's words above.—2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 7:9-17. *w* 10/15 6-8a

Saturday, October 6

[They were] showing all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly.

—Phil. 1:14.

Insolence of face and hardness of heart have been displayed on the part of professed spiritual Israel, Christendom, toward the remnant and their "other sheep" companions who are delivering God's final message during this "conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3, 14) Almighty God knew that he could instill in these the fearlessness that would nerve them to undertake and carry out this challenging work. The irreproachable God has purposed to ward off all possibility of being charged with negligence, of having failed to give due warning to the endangered ones. Circumstances are closing in upon us to the extent where we shall be shown up for what we are. Then the unheeding ones will be forced to own up to the fact that a prophet from Jehovah has been among them. This will leave the God of pure worship with a clean record. Till then we have much work to do! *w* 12/15 11, 12a

Sunday, October 7

Keep on teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, praises to God, spiritual songs with graciousness, singing in your hearts to Jehovah.—Col. 3:16.

Jehovah God graciously gave mankind the gift of music. This was a unique expression of his undeserved kindness, for although music is not needed to sustain life, it enables us to express emotions—our sorrows, our joys. It can bring comfort when there is sadness or greater

happiness in times of joy. Appropriately, then, James wrote fellow Christians: "Is there anyone in good spirits? Let him sing psalms." (Jas. 5:13) Singing and music have long been associated with the worship of Jehovah. His ancient people joyously praised him in song at times of deliverance. God directed the establishment of a musical organization for service at his temple. Jesus Christ and his apostles sang praises after the Lord's Evening Meal. Paul urged fellow Christians to express their sentiments in song, even as noted above. *w* 10/15 1, 2

Monday, October 8

A vast mixed company also went up with them.—Ex. 12:38.

When the Israelite exiles left Babylon in 537 B.C.E. a large number of non-Israelites went back with them to the land of Judah. These included the Nethinim, the male and female slaves and the foreign singers. Such non-Israelite companions picture those today who hear the message of God's Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ and have associated themselves with the remnant of spiritual Israelites since their release from the control of modern Babylon and her worldly allies in the postwar year of 1919. They also resemble the non-Israelites that accompanied the Israelites when these left Egypt under the leadership of Moses in 1513 B.C.E. They also correspond with the "other sheep" that the Fine Shepherd said that he had yet to bring, to combine them finally into "one flock" with those spiritual sheep in "this fold" that contains the heirs of God's heavenly Kingdom.—John 10:16. *w* 7/1 16-18a

Tuesday, October 9

The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection.—Prov. 18:10.

The Christian will find protection, not in possessing firearms, but in 'seeking peace and pursuing it.' (1 Pet. 3:11) Trust in Jehovah. If you are confronted by a criminal, make it known that you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Do not resist the one who threatens violence; give him the material belongings that he demands. Your life is more valuable than these. When cornered and threatened, call on Jehovah for help. Remember the promise above. However, would there not be occasions, such as in traveling through dangerous insurgent territory, when we might be better off carrying firearms for self-defense? The answer emphatically is No. The neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses is well known, and as peace lovers they find protection in such lands. The Scriptures, backed up by modern-day experiences, make it plain that it is inadvisable for individual Christians to carry firearms. *w 7/15 9-11a*

Wednesday, October 10

Unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.—Matt. 24:22.

The fulfillment of Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats was to be part of "the sign" betokening his invisible "presence" and "conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3; 25:31-46) True to the prediction, millions have by now accepted the Kingdom witness being given. They have reacted properly, appreciatively. These

parabolic "sheep" do good to even the least of the spiritual "brothers" of the reigning King Jesus Christ. In cooperation with these "brothers" of his, the "sheep" are doing the overwhelming part of the foretold preaching of "this good news of the kingdom" earth wide for a final witness. These parabolic "sheep" want to inherit "the kingdom prepared for [them] from the founding of the world." (Matt. 24:14; 25:34) The invitation to do this they will receive from the reigning King with the prospect of surviving the great tribulation. *w 8/1 17, 18a*

Thursday, October 11

Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people.—Eph. 5:3.

Commercial interests have made it convenient to have cable television or video cassettes. These may have valid uses, yet many people admittedly obtain them so they can see in their own homes much of the debased entertainment this immoral generation craves. Yes, corruption of the mind and heart can take place in the living room or the den if such material is available there. Though such "entertainment" has become the daily diet of a large segment of the public, it behooves Christians to remember Paul's exhortation to think on 'whatever things are righteous, chaste and praiseworthy.' (Phil. 4:8) As dedicated Christians, what kind of example are we setting for our families and the congregation? Are we practicing what is good and clean in a spiritual and moral sense? (2 Cor. 7:1) The high standard for Christians Paul gives in the above words. *w 8/15 17, 18b*

Friday, October 12

Holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching.—Titus 1:9.

What can an elder do in order to obey these instructions? First, he must regularly set aside time for personal Bible study. This includes his preparation for Christian meetings and speaking assignments. For the sake of his own spiritual health, this preparation should not be superficial. For example, he may be able to underline the answers for a Watchtower study article in a short time, but does that mean that he has *studied* the material? Does he thoroughly understand the development of the theme? Have the cited Bible texts been checked to determine their application? Obviously, that is impossible in a brief session of underlining. Personal study and family study require time. Secondly, since a busy schedule does not allow time for everything, an elder must pay special attention to Christian publications and articles that have a direct bearing on his 'art of teaching, exhortation and giving reproof.' *w 9/1 12-14a*

Saturday, October 13

All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial.—2 Tim. 3:16.

Carelessness in grieving God's holy spirit can lead to rebellion against the evident manifestation of Jehovah's spirit and can mean blasphemy against it, an unforgivable sin. (Eph. 4:30; Matt. 12:31, 32) So may we never start down the path of independence and indulgence in worldly practices from which we once were rescued through Jehovah's undeserved kindness. Instead, let us pray for the holy spirit and yield to its influence, which will

help us to resist the world and its enticements. (Luke 11:13) A marvelous product of God's holy spirit is his inspired Word, even as noted above. Within its pages are 'warning examples for us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived.' (1 Cor. 10:11) Among such warning examples is Demas who failed to use his excellent opportunity to strengthen Paul. (2 Tim. 4:10) How this should move us to stick with fellow believers, not abandoning them because of letting love for the world fill our heart! *w 10/15 10-12b*

Sunday, October 14

According to the way that they call a "sect," in this manner I am rendering sacred service to . . . God.—Acts 24:14.

Members of the long-established Jewish sects disdainfully called the early Christians a sect, that is, "a body of men separating themselves from others and following their own tenets." But in defense before Governor Felix, Paul rejected this misnomer, even as noted above. In no way could Christians be called a sect, for they were following Jesus Christ, not any man. Further, they were certainly not an offshoot of one of the sects of Judaism that existed in the first century C.E. No, early Christianity was not a sect. Nor was it meant to break up into separate sects. In praying to his Father, Christ asked that his followers might "all be one." (John 17:21) His disciples were to 'have love among themselves.' (John 13:35) This excluded any divisive forming of sects. That fact gives the lie to theories of many historians and theologians concerning different types of Christianity. *w 9/15 8-10a*

Monday, October 15

Everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.—John 11:26.

For millions now alive it is most timely to call to mind these words of Jesus. It is indeed thrilling for those millions who seek unending life in a righteous world to perceive that it is now that Jesus' words apply. Even while he was on the earth, Jesus was "the resurrection" for Lazarus and other persons he resurrected. (John 11:25) But these words of his, spoken just before he raised Lazarus, referred particularly to the far-distant future from then. Jesus pointed forward to the time when he would become "the resurrection and the life" not only to his followers who would become joint heirs with him in the heavenly Kingdom but also to dead mankind who will gain eternal life on our earth under the Kingdom. Even in the case of those who would be alive on earth at the time of his Kingdom and who would not be resurrected, Jesus would need to be "the life" because of their still being in a dying state. *w 10/1 1, 2a*

Tuesday, October 16

Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim.—1 Tim. 4:7.

True, many of us are not naturally inclined to study. Yet, if we want to, we can train ourselves to enjoy studying. Studying is part of the godly devotion Paul refers to. At first it may take discipline to get down to it. Soon, though, we will find real interest in learning new points or in getting a deeper understanding of things we already know. Our study will then give us genuine pleasure. Some may feel that since they know

the basic doctrines of the Bible they no longer need to spend time on personal study. They may even complain when similar material is covered more than once in Bible study publications. Yet the Bible speaks of the need for reminders. (Ps. 119:95, 99; 2 Pet. 3:1; Jude 5) If we do not keep reminding ourselves of the truth, of God's righteous standards, of our faith and our hope of salvation, our heart will be influenced by other things. Yes, all such is training with godly devotion as our aim. *w 11/1 9, 10a*

Wednesday, October 17

As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near.—Luke 21:28.

Jesus Christ accurately foretold present world conditions. (Luke 21:26, 27) However, strange as it may seem, there are those who are not becoming fearful and fainting with a sense of helplessness. They are Jehovah's people who do what Jesus urged them to do, as noted above. From the very time of the proposal of a league of nations toward the close of World War I, they have been fearlessly serving notice that man-made substitutes of such kind for the real thing, God's Kingdom, would fail. They have guided their course of action by the prophecy found at Isaiah 8:12. The Kingdom message that they keep on proclaiming is a challenging one, indeed, in a world otherwise oriented. That man-made scheme is really a conspiracy against the interests of God's Kingdom. How, then, could it ever have the blessing and backing of the King of kings, Jehovah God? *w 12/15 1, 2, 4, 5a*

Thursday, October 18

May Jehovah bless you and keep you. May Jehovah make his face shine toward you, and may he favor you. May Jehovah lift up his face toward you and assign peace to you.—Num. 6:24-26.

Pioneers spend considerable time each day telling the Kingdom good news to others. More and more are planning to enter this joyful service. Are you one of these? Truly, it would enable you to 'bear witness thoroughly,' after the apostolic example, concerning the glorious blessings just ahead for all who come to Jehovah, exercising "faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:21) Though they do not take vows to be full-time preachers, these loyal pioneers, including many auxiliary pioneers, are like the Nazirites in ancient Israel, in that often they minister to God at great self-sacrifice. What joy and satisfaction is to be found in denying oneself in order to praise Jehovah more fully! Immediately after stating the law concerning the Nazirites, Jehovah had Moses pronounce the above blessing on the entire nation. *w 1/1 9, 10, 12a*

Friday, October 19

We are not ignorant of his designs.—2 Cor. 2:11.

Sadly, each year some are overcome by Satan's methods. They leave Jehovah. Many of them, in fact, must be disfellowshipped for their ungodly conduct. (1 Cor. 5:13) Others become, as it were, prisoners of war by getting caught up in the Devil's system. Will you stand firm against all of Satan's efforts to cause you to leave Jehovah? If you are to do so, you continually need to be aware of the Devil's subtle de-

signs. As noted by Paul's words above, we are not left in the dark as to how Satan operates. This means that Satan's attention is on us—he is thinking about us, using all his shrewd thinking to get us away from serving God. Is that not a sobering thought? But in the Bible we have a thorough history of Satan's designs, that is, his schemes, maneuvers and strategy, so that no one need be ignorant in this regard. As fine soldiers of Jesus Christ we can study Satan's tactics and thus avoid being caught off guard. *w 1/15 5, 6*

Saturday, October 20

Adorn the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things.—Titus 2:10.

Although the world may consider us fools because of the life-giving message we bear, we should exercise care that our appearance does not in any way detract from that vital message. Extremes in dress, either too fashionable or too unkempt, can do that. In more affluent territory we may need to be extra conscious of appearance and decorum. Does this mean that it is necessary to have an expensive wardrobe? No. One successful evangelizer, who has traveled with her husband, carefully observes how people in the territory dress. Then she chooses a moderate style reflecting local practice. Our present wardrobe, no matter how humble, will suffice if our clothing is clean, pressed and orderly. If you are wearing a jacket, have missing buttons been replaced? If you are wearing business-type shoes, have they been polished? Remember, your neat appearance will command respect for your message. *w 2/1 17a*

Sunday, October 21

You are "a chosen race . . . that you should declare abroad the excellencies" of the one that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.—1 Pet. 2:9.

The modern-day Ezekiel of 1984 is a priestly class, belonging to spiritual Israel, to which the apostle Peter wrote these words. Hence, we recognize the Ezekiel class of today to be made up of those who serve in a spiritual way as underpriests, under the High Priest, Jesus Christ, whom Jehovah swore into the priesthood "according to the manner of Melchizedek." (Heb. 5:10) From the first century, Jehovah God has picked out the members of this "royal priesthood," of which there is today only a small remnant. These serve together as the figurative linen-clad man, who does the marking of worthy ones in their foreheads. However, in view of their small number, the major part of the marking work is being carried on by the members of the "great crowd." What a privilege it is for these to share in this important work! *w 12/15 4-6*

Monday, October 22

Although you ought to be teachers in view of the time, you again need someone to teach you.—Heb. 5:12.

Clearly some of the Hebrew Christians had failed to pay more than the usual attention to the things they had heard. (Heb. 2:1) After learning the "primary doctrine about the Christ," they did not "press on to maturity." (Heb. 6:1) When they ought to have been teachers, they were still on elementary things. What about us? Are we merely coasting or are we progressing through attention

to personal study? Do we try to read part of the Bible daily? Do we study Christian publications with genuine interest, even conversing with others about new things we learn? Are we helping our children to progress beyond the milk of the Word? Can they explain *from the Bible* the truth about the soul, resurrection, Trinity, Paradise earth, and so forth? Are they doing that in the field service, not remaining at last year's level? These are soul-searching questions that surely all parents should ask themselves. *w 2/15 12a*

Tuesday, October 23

Glorious things are being spoken about you, O city of the true God.—Ps. 87:3.

How wonderfully the words at Isaiah 65:21-25 describe the paradisaic condition of Jehovah God's people who have now been gathered as the nucleus of the "new earth"! Do you want to praise Jehovah eternally in that Paradise earth for the marvelous things that he accomplishes through "the Jerusalem above," his devoted womanly organization? (Gal. 4:26) Do you want to see the "heavenly Jerusalem" with Christ its King, the Greater David, triumph over all unrighteousness? Do you want to see the bridal "New Jerusalem" extending its influence down from God and his Christ in heaven, so as to wipe away *all* tears of mankind? If that is your desire, then loyally continue your sacred service in support of all that was pictured by faithful Jerusalem of old, that city of "the grand King," the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. (Ps. 48:2; Rev. 7:15) Thus you may join in the joyful temple melody of Psalm 87:3, as you sing triumphantly the above words. *w 3/15 19-21a*

Wednesday, October 24

I am hoping to come to you and to speak with you face to face, that your joy may be in full measure. The children of your sister . . . send you their greetings.—2 John 12, 13.

John hoped to visit those to whom his second inspired letter originally was written. This would result in a spiritually rewarding interchange of encouragement, along with abundant delight. The Christian love that binds Jehovah's worshippers together was evident in the greetings John conveyed. If he was writing to an individual named Kyria, she apparently had a fleshly sister whose natural children sent their best wishes. But if the apostle was alluding to another congregation, the "sister" he mentioned was that congregation as a whole and the "children" were its individual members. John had been forthright in giving loving counsel that would help fellow believers to reject apostasy and cling to the truth. With God's help, that is what we are determined to do as Christian witnesses of Jehovah. *w 4/1 20-22*

Thursday, October 25

Some are preaching the Christ through envy and rivalry.—Phil. 1:15.

It appears that some in the congregation back in the first century were saying that Jehovah's day had already begun. Others contended that there was no resurrection. And still others said that the resurrection had already taken place. Paul warned Timothy of the need for being alert to those among such ones who would cause division and deviation from the body of Christian

truth available, even as noted at 1 Timothy 1:3-7. What does all of this tell us? This: that there were problems of divisive thinking back there. There was opposition from *within*, from among those who were claiming to be a part of the congregation of God. And what was the cause? *Today's English Version* mentions such ones as having an improper motive, being "jealous and quarrelsome." Yes, the things written in times past do serve as a warning example to us, and more so now since we are living right at the end of the wicked system of things. *w 3/1 10, 11a*

Friday, October 26

I am the resurrection and the life.—John 11:25.

To people now living on earth, the reigning King Jesus Christ becomes "the life" due to the fact that they exercise faith in him, this faith being proved by works. During this "conclusion of the system of things," these works would include taking an active part in the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy at Matthew 24:14 to preach the good news of God's Kingdom before "the end" of the system comes. (Matt. 24:3) The exercisers of faith who survive the end of the current system of things and who look forward to life in Paradise restored will never need to die at all. (1 John 2:17) They will return to the days of their youth, yes, back to human perfection such as the first man, Adam, possessed. We have basis for believing that there are living today millions of such potential candidates for an unbroken endless life on earth. Jesus provided the basis for such a hope in the words of his prophecy at Matthew 24:21, 22. *w 10/1 1, 3, 4a*

Saturday, October 27

We must obey God as ruler rather than men.—Acts 5:29.

Since Jehovah in his Word tells us that we must be his witnesses, testifying to his Godship and Kingdom, what creature, high or low in station, has the right or authority to order or force us to stop speaking it? (Isa. 43:10, 12) The position of the Christian apostles of 1,900 years ago must be taken, when they said to officials the above. Men have not made gods out of themselves by inventing the nuclear bomb, and they must answer to the Most High God as to how they use it. By producing the nuclear bomb as a deterrent, the governments seek to perpetuate their domination of the earth, rather than to advance the interests of the Kingdom of God. They resent and interfere with the proclaiming of that Kingdom by the true, obedient followers of Jesus Christ today. This nuclear age has not made out of date or impractical Christ's prophetic words that "in all the nations the good news has to be preached first."—Mark 13:10. *w 12/15 10, 11*

Sunday, October 28

May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace by your believing, that you may abound in hope with power of holy spirit.—Rom. 15:13.

Abound in hope? What reason is there today to "abound in hope"? Just before he expressed this prayer, Paul stated a reason, quoting from Isaiah 11:1-10: "There will be one arising to rule nations; on him nations will rest their hope." (Rom. 15:12) Why should the nations hope in Jesus' name? (Matt. 12:18-21) Because of all that his

name stands for. While he was here on earth he made a name as a flawless integrity-keeper. Persecution, tortures—nothing could swerve him from loyally doing God's will down to the death. (Phil. 2:9-11) Jesus' name now stands for the high office to which Jehovah has exalted him as High Priest and King "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." (Heb. 8:1) He is the One called "Faithful and True," on whose account the entire prophetic word focuses. (Rev. 19:11) It is our privilege to make his name known. *w 11/15 1-4a*

Monday, October 29

To earthing man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step.—Jer. 10:23.

The inability of humans to bring true freedom in the important things of life emphasizes what is here said. No, God did not create man with the ability or prerogative to be independent of His direction and be successful. This is one reason why God has allowed so many thousands of years of human rule independent from him, to demonstrate once and for all time that such rule cannot bring true freedom and happiness. Hence, Psalm 146:3 wisely counsels: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthing man, to whom no salvation belongs." Then whom can we trust? The Bible answers: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight." (Prov. 3:5, 6) Why can we put such complete confidence in Jehovah? Because he is "the God of truth."—Ps. 31:5. *w 4/15 15, 16*

Tuesday, October 30

You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength. . . . You must love your neighbor as yourself.

—Mark 12:30, 31.

If we truly love Jehovah God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we will fear to displease him. So, as lovers of Jehovah may we never shrink back or let ourselves get spotted by the world or by our own fallen inclinations. (Heb. 10:38, 39) Very helpful also in keeping clean and holy is sincere, unselfish love for our brothers. If we are truly interested in their spiritual welfare, we will be careful not to cause them offense or make them feel unclean by our own unclean talk, unclean looks, or by flirting or engaging in unclean conduct. Remember, love "does not rejoice over unrighteousness." (1 Cor. 13:4, 6) Unselfish love for God and neighbor will keep us from sinning in these respects. It will cause us to exercise self-control, 'making straight paths for our feet.'—Heb. 12:13. *w 5/1 20, 21b*

Thursday, November 1

Why, for that matter, I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ.

—Phil. 3:8.

Many men have been tempted to seek prominence on the job. If inner motives were faced, a man might see that he wants to be a foreman primarily because of the prestige involved. Might it be that some Chris-

Wednesday, October 31

Love covers a multitude of sins.

—1 Pet. 4:8.

Since this is so, marriage mates should not make an issue over all differences and human flaws. But some have fearfully held back from discussing *serious problems*; or if they did discuss these, their mate belittled them. Sadly, patterns of conduct are thus established that often lead to marital disaster. One Christian wife was deeply upset for some time because of her husband's lack of consideration for her emotional make-up during sexual intimacy. She felt she was being "used" for his self-gratification. She considered leaving him. Yet she had not even discussed it with her husband, fearing that he would not understand. Following the advice of a mature Christian, she finally bared her pent-up feelings. He had *not realized* how his actions were affecting her! He made needed changes and now that problem no longer mars their happiness. Preserve the honorableness of your marriage by cultivating personal communication. *w 6/1 16*

tians, who have financial security and who could reduce their work hours (or retire) and pioneer, have been tempted to continue in jobs where they have prominence in a corporation? What a fine example Paul set! He had position and influence along with financial security in the Jewish system. But he took the loss of all in order to "gain Christ and be found in union with him." Realizing this to be the way to gain approval of lasting worth, Paul never turned back to weak, elementary things.—Phil. 3:4-11. *w 6/15 16a*

Friday, November 2

Go, my people, enter into your interior rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for a moment until the denunciation passes over. For, look! Jehovah is coming forth from his place to call to account the error of the inhabitant of the land.

—Isa. 26:20, 21.

It will not be very long now before Jehovah fully expresses his denunciation against Babylon the Great by having her worldly allies destroy her even before they themselves get destroyed during "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at the battle site of Har-Magedon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) Then the bloodshed of which Babylon the Great will have been guilty will be exposed and be repaid to her. Human creatures for the killing of whom she has been responsible either directly or indirectly will no longer lie covered over and be ignored. (Rev. 18:21, 24) Accounts will be settled for them by the executing of the killer. Many are the witnesses of Jehovah who have been killed by Babylon the Great! w 7/1 12a

Saturday, November 3

What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?

—Matt. 24:3.

What the inquiring apostles themselves witnessed down to the end of the first century C.E. was a miniature fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy, but those things happening away back there did not make up a composite "sign" denoting his "presence" and "the conclusion of the system of things." So

in order for the truthfulness of Jesus' prophecy to be upheld, there had to be a major fulfillment of his words later on, during the days of the last members of his "little flock" of Kingdom heirs. (Luke 12:32) That would be from the end of the Gentile Times forward till now. As we look at world history since that date, in the light of Bible prophecy, we cannot but come to the conviction that we are living in "the conclusion of the system of things." This conviction is borne up by the fulfillment of Revelation 6:3-17. w 8/1 9, 10a

Sunday, November 4

Everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.—John 11:26.

The fulfillment of prophecy indicates that the statement can now be made with confidence and with due foresight, "Millions now alive will never die off our earth," in keeping with the words of Jesus above. Already the living members of the "great crowd" are exercising faith in the Lamb. By the dedication of themselves to God and by symbolizing this by water baptism, they acknowledge that they owe salvation entirely to God and his Son. They are in the courtyards of Jehovah's temple, standing before His throne, acceptably so because they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. (Rev. 7:9, 10, 14) The covering of righteousness being thus imputed to the "great crowd," life may now also be entered upon their account. They can be looked upon as 'friends of God' even as Abraham was.—Rom. 6:13; Jas. 2:23. w 10/1 16-18a

Monday, November 5

Flee the evil desires of youth.—2 Tim. 2:22, New International Version.

If you are going to school, how do you view other students who show no interest in serving Jehovah God? They may seem to be nice-looking individuals. Yet, many of them smoke and illegally drink alcoholic beverages. They see nothing wrong with taking mind-altering drugs. How will association with such persons affect you? How much pressure can you take from them before they prevail upon or coerce you into indulging in their vices? If you refuse, suppose they ridicule you and resort to name-calling? Is your faith so strong that you can continue to associate with such ones and not be affected? (1 Cor. 10:12) Will you give in to temptation and indulge as an "experiment" just to see what it is like? Do you think you can remain strong, firm and loyal to Jehovah and his Word by continuing such association? If you are so inclined, beware! To counteract permissiveness, fight the fine fight by resisting any urge or inclination toward bad association. w 8/15 15b

Tuesday, November 6

The overseer should therefore be . . . a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness.

—1 Tim. 3:2, 4.

The requirement of properly caring for one's household presents a challenge to many elders. How can an elder take the lead in the congregation and yet not neglect the spiritual and emotional needs of his wife and children? It is not easy. Certainly, spiritual maturity is required to keep a fine balance

between these responsibilities. Sometimes members of the congregation demand time and attention that the elder rightfully should give his family. Why is his concern for his family so vital? Because if he neglects his family relationships or the minor dependent children turn spiritually delinquent, then, regardless of all his abilities and zeal, he will no longer qualify to be an elder. Therefore, we should remember that shepherding begins at home! Yes, a careful balance has to be manifested, by both the elder and his family. w 9/1 6, 7a

Wednesday, November 7

There should not be divisions among you.—1 Cor. 1:10.

There is no basis for the claim that there were different kinds of Christianity in apostolic times. Such theories are set forth by men who either have no faith in Christianity or accept as normal Christendom's being divided into hundreds of churches and sects. The facts are quite different. Before Paul ever became a Christian, Jesus commissioned His disciples to be His witnesses in all nations. Paul himself fought against any tendency to follow men, stating the above. So it is quite futile to claim that Paul had a different conception of Christianity than did James, Peter and John. They were all united in the work of spreading the good news. On one occasion, probably at the time of the council on circumcision held in Jerusalem in 49 C.E., the four of them cooperated fully with regard to the dividing up of the preaching field. Naturally, being imperfect humans, the early Christians had their differences. Paul once put Peter straight on a certain point.—Gal. 2:11-14. w 9/15 10-12a

Thursday, November 8

Jehovah . . . has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem . . . Whoever there is among you . . . let him go up to Jerusalem . . . and rebuild the house of Jehovah.—Ezra 1:2, 3.

Imagine the excitement of the Jews in Babylon when they heard this proclamation of Cyrus! Tens of thousands responded, and there was great joy when the foundation of the new temple was finally laid. (Ezra 2:64; 3:10-13) However, that enthusiasm quickly waned. Neighboring enemies objected and maneuvered an official order to halt the temple-building work. The Jews started to build fine houses for themselves. (Hag. 1:4) Of course, they had not abandoned their faith. But they had lost the fervent love they earlier had for Jehovah. Doubtless, they thought they were being balanced in what they were doing. But Jehovah did not agree. He sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to stir up their zeal and encourage them to finish building Jehovah's house. A similar loss of love can happen to Christians in our time. *w 11/1 20-22*

Friday, November 9

Jehovah God made earth and heaven.—Gen. 2:4.

Hearing the name Jehovah should make us think of the Creator, who made us. (Gen. 2:7) Thus, we owe Him our life. His creating *made our own existence possible*. More than being the Creator, he is the Purposer. It is understood that the name Jehovah means "He causes to become." He causes himself to become whatever is required so that, without fail, his purposes and promises will be accomplished. The entire Bible explains the Creator. It re-

lates his faithfulness, uprightness and justice. (Ps. 25:8; Deut. 32:4) The Bible presents Jehovah as King (Ps. 10:16), Judge (Ps. 50:6), Father (Isa. 64:8), Teacher (Isa. 50:4) and Helper (Ps. 30:2). His name should remind us of his loving acts, of the fact that he has established right principles and that he has the right to require the obedience and devotion of his earthly children. We also read: "Jehovah is guarding all those loving him, but all the wicked ones he will annihilate."—Ps. 145:20. *w 12/1 8, 9, 12, 13*

Saturday, November 10

May [you] abound in hope with power of holy spirit.

—Rom. 15:13.

Why should we today "abound in hope"? It is because the prophetic word shows that Jesus Christ is about to undo all the harm that sinner Adam brought upon mankind. (Rom. 5:19) As God's High Priest in the heavens, Jesus will apply the merit of his perfect human sacrifice in restoring all obedient mankind to human perfection, with the prospect of living forever in happiness on a Paradise earth. Jesus will "rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Cor. 15:25, 26) Then, all humans will delight in perfection of life in that peaceful Paradise. Only through the Bible can we learn of the real purpose of life. Only God, through his Word, can explain where we came from, why we are here, and what the future holds for us. The Bible gives us a long-range view of the outworking of the purposes of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. It is our duty to make these things known to all who will hear. *w 11/15 5, 6a*

Sunday, November 11

Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway.—Ps. 119:105.

Today we have the entire Bible as our guide. How thankful we should be! But without having even one full Bible book, the godly patriarchs and their loyal wives did not use the world to the full. Abraham did as Jehovah directed by leaving Ur. Excavations there reveal that he and his beloved wife must have made notable sacrifices to go where God directed, dwelling in tents as alien residents. Isaac and Jacob also acted in faith as "heirs with [Abraham] of the very same promise." Worldly interests were of relatively little consequence to Abraham. (Heb. 11:8-10) The prophet Moses furnishes another fine example of one who trusted in Jehovah and rejected worldly desires, for he "esteemed the reproach of [being God's anointed servant] as riches greater than the treasures of Egypt." Clearly, Moses could have made no finer decision. (Heb. 11:24-27) Neither can we. Surely such examples serve as a guide for us. *w 10/15 13, 14b*

Monday, November 12

Have on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

—1 Thess. 5:8.

Yes, to fight against subtle forms of materialism, we need as a helmet "the HOPE OF SALVATION." Having on this hope means looking forward to the reward by Jehovah God. Moses had on this helmet, "the hope of salvation." Even though he was raised as the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, he refused to choose "the temporary enjoyment of sin" in the roy-

al household or to pursue "the treasures of Egypt." Why? "For he looked intently toward the payment of the reward." Moses meditated, or thought deeply, about the things that Jehovah had promised. It was not simply that Moses had heard or read about Jehovah. "He continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (Heb. 11:24-27) Jehovah was real to Moses and so were His promises of everlasting life. If we are to resist Satan's attacks successfully, our hope of living forever must be just as real. *w 1/15 10, 11a*

Tuesday, November 13

Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked.

—Eph. 5:15, 16.

Is it not true that a schedule is vital if important matters are to be cared for? We probably have a scheduled time for eating and sleeping, as well as for our schooling or work. If we are going to get things done, a schedule is important. The same can be said regarding our house-to-house preaching. Since Satan the Devil is fighting to keep the good news of God's Kingdom from reaching the people, we need to have a schedule if we are to have a regular share in Kingdom preaching. Otherwise, it may well be that 'we just cannot find time' to do this work. It is Satan's aim to see that this occurs. But we should feel like the apostle Paul who wrote: "Necessity is laid upon me. Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!" (1 Cor. 9:16) For us to find time for an effective schedule we must heed Paul's words above. *w 2/1 15a*

Wednesday, November 14

The man that has entered into God's rest has also himself rested from his own works.
—Heb. 4:10.

Worldly persons may want to "be somebody," such as by acquiring a position or a title. Or they may pursue a philosophy of being a nice person. But instead of works of unbelief or those in which a person tries to justify himself, we must have works reflecting our faith. Yes, the key point in Hebrews is that we must "do our utmost to enter into [God's] rest, for fear anyone should fall in . . . disobedience." (Heb. 4:11) We can have the deep satisfaction of being in that rest right now, as well as the assured hope of continuing in it when all alive on earth worship God. There is no question about Jehovah's willingness to bless and preserve those who, through faith and obedience, enter into his rest now. He is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Heb. 11:6) By our faith and endurance, and with God's help, we can "lay hold on the hope set before us."—Heb. 6:18. *w* 2/15 19, 20, 22a

Thursday, November 15

We are holding ourselves in readiness to inflict punishment for every disobedience, as soon as your own obedience has been fully carried out.—2 Cor. 10:6.

In our spiritual warfare we all must meet some very important requirements. For example, Paul stressed that obedience to Christ must be "fully carried out." How can we determine whether this is now being reflected in our own course and attitude? The following questions should help us in our individual determination: Have we

truly put our service to God and Christ far ahead of any human relationship? (Matt. 10:37) Have we got rid of any ambition to be rich in material things or to be well spoken of in worldly circles? (Luke 6:20-26) Are we anxious to please our Leader and Commander instead of being anxious about those things Jehovah has promised to provide—food, clothing and shelter? (Matt. 6:25-32) Do we truly love our brothers and seek the welfare of all enrolled in this spiritual warfare against God's enemies?—1 Pet. 4:8. *w* 3/1 11

Friday, November 16

As a fine soldier of Christ Jesus take your part in suffering evil. No man serving as a soldier involves himself in the commercial businesses of life, in order that he may gain the approval of the one who enrolled him as a soldier.

—2 Tim. 2:3, 4.

In view of Satan's wrath against Christ's followers, to each one of these comes this stirring exhortation of the apostle Paul. Every other activity in life must take second place to our service for Jehovah's great Field Marshal. The reality and the nature of this spiritual warfare comes home to us as we consider Paul's further words at 2 Corinthians 10:3-6. As soldiers of Christ Jesus, we want to demonstrate for all to see that we are submissive to his battle orders and ever ready to share in and carry out the strategies that he chooses. To encourage us in the field of spiritual contest, Jehovah God has had recorded meaningful prophetic types of happenings now taking place, even as indicated at Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:11. *w* 3/1 4, 5

Saturday, November 17

The spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God.—1 Cor. 2:10.

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul spoke about the organization of which they were now a part. (Eph. 4:4-6, 17, 18) He mentioned Jehovah's wonderful purpose for mankind and man's part in relation to that purpose. And he reminded them of Christian principles that would help them to be successful in the family and in the congregation. Some of what Paul wrote may have been new to the Ephesian Christians, but much of it must have covered what they had heard before. Nevertheless, Paul wanted to remind them of these matters and perhaps provide fresh insight into them. Thus he helped the Ephesians to refurbish their spiritual armor and to "grasp mentally with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of God's love. (Eph. 3:14-19) Our personal study, too, will refresh us and enrich our understanding of many basic points, as well as help us to grasp the deeper things of God's Word. *w* 11/1 11-13a

Sunday, November 18

Most of the brothers . . . speak the word of God fearlessly.
—Phil. 1:14.

From 1935 onward hundreds upon hundreds responded, making an unreserved dedication of themselves to God through his "one shepherd" and symbolizing that dedication by public immersion in water. And by now, in spite of the interruption by World War II, those "other sheep" have built up to a "flock" of two and a half million members or more, in 205 lands. Many of these lands lie outside

of what is called Christendom, such as Japan, where there is a yearly average of more than 77,500 dedicated proclaimers of the Kingdom message, Korea with more than 31,000 and Nigeria with more than 102,300. Admittedly, hard-faced, hard-hearted Christendom is being put to shame by such a response to the call of the "one shepherd" in those lands where the spoken language may be difficult and somewhat unintelligible for Jehovah's Witnesses. But this has not deterred them in the least. *w* 12/15 20, 21a

Monday, November 19

Look out for yourselves, that you do not lose the things we have worked to produce, but that you may obtain a full reward.—2 John 8.

Thus John urged because there was danger of being turned aside from the truth to apostasy. By preaching the good news, John and others had 'produced' fruitage resulting in the conversion of this letter's original recipients. But only by 'looking out' for themselves spiritually would they not "lose" undeserved kindness, mercy and peace from Jehovah and his Son, as well as lasting fellowship with all those bound together in truth and love. But, as John goes on to show, the apostate deceivers were pushing ahead and did "not remain in the teaching of the Christ" because they did not stick to the truth taught by Jesus and his faithful apostles. (2 John 9) On the other hand, faithful witnesses of Jehovah confess that Christ came in the flesh, for they exercise faith in his ransom sacrifice and stick to what he and his loyal apostles taught. —Matt. 20:28. *w* 4/1 15, 16

Tuesday, November 20

The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants.

—Amos 3:7.

Some claim that God did not author the Bible. But Jehovah, who made the ear, the eye, electricity and sound, by means of his "dynamic energy" surely could project his thoughts to his faithful servants on earth. (Isa. 40:26) 'But,' others say, 'the Bible is hard to understand.' Yes, some of it is. Why did God author the Bible that way? Because then he is the One who determines who gets the truth. Paul stated about God's wisdom and sacred secret: "It is to us God has revealed them through his spirit." (1 Cor. 2:10) God thus reserves the right to reveal his truths only to those who really want them and who are willing to live by them and serve him faithfully, even as noted above. Yes, there is a God of truth. His truths are found in his inspired Word. And he reveals its meaning to his humble, unified servants, so that they can make them known to others. *w 4/15 18-20*

Wednesday, November 21

He has told you, O earthing man, what is good. And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?

—Mic. 6:8.

To keep clean as bearers of Jehovah's utensils, we must guard against such things as entertaining immoral ideas and flirting with individuals other than our marriage mate. (Isa. 52:11) As Paul counseled at 1 Timothy 5:1, 2, Christian men should treat their older spiritual sis-

ters as mothers and the younger women as their fleshly sisters with all chasteness. But in all of this our sisters also have a responsibility, namely, "to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind." (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) When women look into a mirror, doubtless they know whether they appear modest or whether their attire and bearing have sexy overtones. Modesty is the opposite of worldly sensuality. Surely, we should all want to take the above fine counsel to heart. *w 5/1 14b*

Thursday, November 22

The former things have passed away. And the One seated on the throne said: "Look! I am making all things new." Also, he says: "Write, because these words are faithful and true."

—Rev. 21:4, 5.

What a glorious work lies ahead of those who survive the end of this conclusion of the system of things and who enter into the new system where the fiery-colored horse, the black horse and the pale horse followed by Hades will no more streak through the inhabited earth—especially so with the resurrection of all redeemed mankind in the offing! Yet even now, before the ride of the four horsemen is over, glorious is the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in proclaiming the best of news. It is the news of Jehovah's royal government in the hands of Christ that will beautify the new system of things with a Paradise that will encircle the whole earth and fill it with peace-keeping redeemed mankind, blessed with everlasting life in human perfection that reflects the image and likeness of God. *w 5/15 16, 17a*

Friday, November 23

Has one found a good wife? One has found a good thing, and one gets goodwill from Jehovah.—Prov. 18:22.

It is only proper that a married man be eager to "gain the approval of his wife." (1 Cor. 7:33) But as a man advances spiritually and shows the qualities of a good husband he will likely be appointed to service privileges in the congregation. This would take up some of the time that previously was shared with his wife, calling to mind Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 7:29. Many wives have unselfishly bided their time on various occasions while their husbands had to care for necessary congregational duties. *They are truly to be commended!* Their patient support is deeply appreciated by their husbands and Jehovah. They are just what the Bible says—"a crown" to their husbands and they bring God's "goodwill"! (Prov. 12:4) So, husbands, continue showing self-sacrificing love. Wives, continue to respond with unselfish support. Build your marriage around your relationship with God. *w 6/1 22-24a*

Saturday, November 24

I will rock all the nations, and the desirable things of all the nations must come in; and I will fill this house with glory.

—Hag. 2:7.

In fulfillment of the prophetic song of Isaiah 26:1-6, the members of the newborn nation have entered through wide-open gates in making their approach to the "heavenly Jerusalem." (Heb. 12:22) These Kingdom heirs joyfully heed the words of the song: "Trust in Jehovah, you people, for all times, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of times indefinite."

Jehovah has added to the nation, up to its full membership, and these citizens of the holy nation hail Jehovah, confident that he is about to bring all his grand purpose to fulfillment. In recent years Jehovah has extended the borders of his theocratic land still farther. This he has done to make room for "the desirable things" out of all the worldly nations—a "great crowd" that becomes part of his dedicated people. These 'fill his house with glory' as they, too, witness to his name and Kingdom. *w 1/1 2, 3a*

Sunday, November 25

The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces.—Isa. 25:8.

The priority of the spiritual paradise over the literal as to time is indicated by Isaiah 25:6-8. This prophecy is fulfilled spiritually today in the spiritual paradise, where Jehovah's people are enjoying a rich "banquet." Because of their believing, they are filled with joy and peace, and abound in hope of Kingdom blessings. Isaiah's words have had remarkable fulfillment toward the anointed remnant, restored from Babylon the Great, before Armageddon. And Revelation 7:17 applies these same words to the blessed condition of the "great crowd" today. Isaiah's words are quoted in connection with the "new earth," at Revelation 21:3, 4. Surely, the anointed remnant, along with the "great crowd," have every reason to abound in hope as glorious fulfillments of God's prophetic word unfold before their eyes. Hope will not be disappointed, for all of Jehovah's grand promises must at last become a reality.—Heb. 6:18. *w 11/15 19, 20a*

Monday, November 26

[Jehovah] has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God.
—2 Cor. 4:6.

To become a witness of Jehovah many have abandoned unclean and disapproved practices that are linked with darkness because they wanted to live in the light of the truth and have God's approval. The objectives of many before becoming a true Christian were to earn a living, have a family, find some entertainment or prepare for the "winter" of old age. Certainly those things are not wrong. Yet how would such a life differ from that of a squirrel, a sparrow or other animal that is born, grows up, eats, sleeps, mates and finally dies? (Eccl. 3:18-20) However, after becoming true Christians their lives have meaning; their goals are centered on serving the Creator. Also previously these did not know why wickedness exists, why things are getting worse, the condition of the dead or what the future holds. But now all these have a Bible understanding of such matters.
w 6/15 2-4a

Tuesday, November 27

Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people.—Eph. 5:3.

Never forget that the imperfect human heart is treacherous, desperate. (Jer. 17:9) Is your heart persuading you to listen to or dance to music that you know is wrong in Jehovah's eyes? If so, beware! Prayerfully seek God's help so that you can 'keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord and quit sharing in the works belonging to darkness.' (Eph.

5:10, 11) Your firm refusal to listen to or dance to sexually debased music may even serve to reprove others whose heart may be misleading them. Those immersed in the spirit of this wicked system of things may take delight in sexually debased music. But how could this possibly be true of faithful Christians? They are counseled as above. Have we fittingly repudiated ungodliness and worldly desires? Then let us watch not only what we say but also what we listen to, so that it does not include songs about immorality.
w 10/15 16, 17

Wednesday, November 28

As regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.
—2 Chron. 16:9.

A mature Christian will want to avoid bloodguilt, having in mind Jehovah's viewpoint on the sanctity of blood. (Gen. 9:6; Ps. 55:23) He will therefore try to find unarmed employment. Some Witnesses by talking with their employer have been successful in changing to a job that does not require carrying a weapon. In pursuing the path of peace Jehovah's Witnesses have so many times found protection—physically, morally, spiritually! Clearly this Scriptural course is the one to be followed. In the few cases where there have been casualties among faithful Christians, their fearlessness to the death has placed them in line for an early resurrection. At times Jehovah permits Satan to place severe tests on His people. But whatever may come in these violent times, let it never sway us from our integrity. Let us trust in God.
w 7/15 18, 20a

Thursday, November 29

Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.—Luke 21:24.

In referring to 'Jerusalem' being trampled by the Gentiles, Jesus had in mind what the earthly Jerusalem was before the trampling upon it by the Gentiles began. He himself had said somewhat earlier: "Do not swear at all, neither by heaven, because it is God's throne; . . . nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King." (Matt. 5:34, 35) So, when the Gentiles started trampling Jerusalem in the exercising of world domination, they were trampling upon God's Kingdom as represented by the royal city of Jerusalem. Consistently, then, at the conclusion of the Gentile Times when the trampling down of what Jerusalem represented was completed, the Kingdom of God was reestablished in the hands of the royal descendant of King David, the Messiah. Ezekiel 21:25-27 refers to this time, and the one whose "legal right" it is to rule is none other than Jesus Christ.
w 8/1 8, 9, 10

Saturday, December 1

Upon his outer garment . . . he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.
—Rev. 19:16.

This "King of kings and Lord of lords," Jesus Christ, is now present. We have "the sign" for this. (Matt. 24:3) He has been present in his God-given Kingdom since the end of "the times of the Gentiles" in the year 1914, 70 years ago. (Luke 21:24, *Authorized Version*) Then the trampling down of the Kingdom of Jehovah God as once represented by the kingdom of Israel in Jerusalem in the royal

Friday, November 30

An overseer must be free from accusation as God's steward, not self-willed, not prone to wrath, . . . not a smiter, . . . self-controlled.—Titus 1:7, 8.

A series of requirements that has a great bearing on how the elder treats fellow Christians is given above, even as Paul put it in his letter to Titus. These requirements indicate that an elder must be Christlike in personality. That surely is a high standard. But the standard is the same for every Christian! We all have to be imitators of Christ, and that means we must be peaceable, even as the disciple James expressed it at James 3:17, 18. As elders, do we 'make peace'? No elder would want to be a cause of strife and contention. A body of elders should set a good example in this respect. Thus, the congregation will not be upset because of disputes among elders. (1 Tim. 2:8) Occasionally, there will be differences of opinion. However, the reasonable man will be willing to yield when Scriptural principles are not involved.
w 9/1 8-11a

line of King David ended. Over in the Middle East the city of Jerusalem has no king of the family line of David but is the capital city of the Republic of Israel, with a Jewish prime minister. But what about the "heavenly Jerusalem"? (Heb. 12:22) It is up there in the superhuman, super-Gentile realm that the Son of David, Jesus Christ, reigns since the running out of the Gentile Times in 1914. The Gentile nations here on earth may oppose the Kingdom and its proclaimers, but how glad we are that they cannot touch it!
w 5/15 1a

Sunday, December 2

Most of the brothers . . . speak the word of God fearlessly.
—Phil. 1:14.

In the middle of the fourth decade of our 20th century, timely consideration was given to the words of Jesus at John 10:16 and their relationship to Revelation 7:9-17. For those who were classed as "other sheep" to listen to the voice of the "one shepherd" at this time required fearlessness. Jehovah's Witnesses were undergoing fiery persecution at the hands of the nationalist forces under Adolf Hitler, with the backing of the Catholic Church. So in the face of a world background like that, it called for faith, conviction and fearlessness on the part of Brother Rutherford to point out, in 1935, that the "great multitude" of Revelation 7:9-17 (*Authorized Version*) was to be made up of those foretold "other sheep" and that these were to be made "one flock" with the persecuted anointed remnant that was in this one fold. Nevertheless, he had to "speak the word of God fearlessly." This he did. *w 12/15 17, 19a*

Monday, December 3

The showy display of one's means of life . . . originates with the world.—1 John 2:16.

The experience of a Christian elder in Germany, who happens to be wealthy, is noteworthy. A Christian brother, knowing something about his financial status, asked him why he drove a Volkswagen (a less expensive car) and lived in a modest apartment. Becoming very serious, he answered: 'Because if I drove a Mercedes Benz (a luxury car) and lived in an ostentatious manner, it could have

a damaging effect on the spirituality of my Christian brothers and sisters.' How different that attitude is from the world's! To make a "showy display of one's means of life" is the way of the world. According to the world, the measure of success is the amount of money and material possessions a person has. But may that never be so in the Christian organization! We need to be armed so that none of this type of satanic thinking infiltrates our own thinking and that of the congregation of the Christian witnesses of Jehovah. *w 1/15 7a*

Tuesday, December 4

Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also.
—Col. 3:13.

Despite the best of efforts, no couple will agree on everything. Are you willing to accommodate and allow for differences in your marriage? The perfect mate does not exist. Satisfaction can be attained by learning to accept differences and to put up with minor weaknesses, even as the apostle Paul urges us to do. The fact is, our relationship with God, wanting him to remain our Friend, is the strongest incentive to keep our marriage honorable. Truly commendable is the course of those Christians who out of regard for their relationship with Jehovah have striven to make a success of their marriage. To make a success of your marriage, it is helpful to (1) cultivate personal communication, (2) keep the law of loving-kindness on your tongue, (3) allow for differences and imperfection. *w 6/1 21-23*

Wednesday, December 5

You accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit, so that you came to be an example to all the believers.—1 Thess. 1:6, 7.

Few would deny that much of today's entertainment is "weak and beggarly." (Gal. 4:9) Selectivity is a must. Yet even with entertainment that does not clearly violate godly principles, care is needed because of the time and resources involved. Individually, or as a family, sit down and calculate realistically how much time and money you use on entertainment in an average week or month. In doing so, include television time. That is increasingly a problem as programmers offer more serials—even of documentaries, historical presentations and sports play-offs—so that the viewer is drawn back repeatedly. Clearly, Christians must work to control how they use their limited time and resources so as not to be drawn back to weak and beggarly things. However, we thank God that there are ever so many who are exemplary in these matters. *w 6/15 17, 18a*

Thursday, December 6

It came about that as soon as the spirit settled down upon them, then they proceeded to act as prophets.—Num. 11:25.

When Moses felt that the administrative burden of the nation was too great for him, he confessed the problem to Jehovah. His solution was for Moses to 'gather 70 older men of the people and officers of theirs.' (Num. 11:16, 17) Moses did as he was commanded, and, as a result, Jehovah put some of his spirit upon them, even as noted above. Here was clear evidence of the theocratic appointment of these "older

men." Jehovah had organized his people for deliverance from captivity and now he was using 'capable, trustworthy men, who feared God' to share the responsibility of leadership and administration with Moses. (Ex. 18:21) When the Israelites went back to fixed dwellings in towns and cities, the older men became responsible for the people at a community level. They acted as a body of overseers, providing judges and officers for the administration of justice and the maintenance of peace, good order and spiritual health. *w 9/1 6-8*

Friday, December 7

Moreover, if you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham's seed, heirs with reference to a promise.—Gal. 3:29.

Every detail of the promise given at Genesis 22:17, 18 is of interest to persons who share Abraham's faith and who want to be blessed by Jehovah. Who, primarily, was the seed of Abraham, by means of whom all nations of the earth would eventually bless themselves? Paul identifies this primary Seed as being Christ. (Gal. 3:16) Further, since Jehovah promised Abraham that he would multiply his seed, what persons would make up the secondary part of Abraham's seed? Who would be the "heirs with reference to a promise," "joint heirs" with the primary Seed, Christ? (Rom. 8:17) For some 2,000 years even the number remained unknown until the apostle John heard it. (Rev. 7:4) Still, from among whom would these 144,000 be chosen? Since not a sufficient number of fleshly Israelites followed the Law covenant as a "tutor leading to Christ," it was necessary to go to the Gentiles. —Gal. 3:24. *w 8/15 6-8*

Saturday, December 8

I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. But I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.—Acts 20:20, 21.

Although we have been ridiculed and viewed as fools for using this apostolic method of Kingdom preaching, its tremendous success shows that it has God's approval. Thus one who analyzed the growth of Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan reported: "The majority of those who have become Witnesses declare that they first had their interest awakened by receiving a house-call from a publisher." Also, years ago a Catholic priest told some 200 parish priests at a seminary in New York: "The secret of the phenomenal success of St. Paul was his tireless use of the house-to-house method of recruiting converts. It is ironic that this apostolic method is now used by non-Catholic sects, especially Jehovah's Witnesses." *w* 2/1 13, 14a

Sunday, December 9

Who has seen things like these? Will a land be brought forth with labor pains in one day?—Isa. 66:8.

Jehovah has laid the foundations of a new earth, a godly society among humans that will expand until, in due course, it fills the entire globe, to Jehovah's praise. (Isa. 11:9) In the year 1919 Jehovah caused his wifely "Jerusalem above" to bring forth "a land"—a most prosperous estate—into which he ushered the remaining ones of his spiritual Israel on earth. This "land" has proved to be

a spiritual paradise, and it is here that Jehovah's people have been assembled as the nucleus of the "new earth." There has been no need to wait until after the final tribulation to enter that spiritual paradise. It is already here! Truly, Jehovah's heavenly organization has become a praise in all the earth as his Witnesses preach throughout the globe. And the greater part of this praising is done now by the "great crowd" who render God sacred service day and night. *w* 3/15 15, 16a

Monday, December 10

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd.—John 10:16.

Under the final test that will be imposed upon all restored mankind at the end of the thousand years of Christ's reign, those who prove their whole-souled integrity to the Most High God will keep their names recorded in "the book of life." (Rev. 20:7-15) What a unique privilege is now set before the "great crowd" of "other sheep." (Rev. 7:9) The hope that is set before them—that of living in unmarred happiness in a garden of Eden restored to earth and expanded worldwide—is most inviting. Truly they will have something for which to live. Among all mankind that will dwell upon the Paradise earth their experience will indeed be unique and different, that of having survived the end of this wicked system of things and of never dying off our earth. The only one to be thanked for this is the Source of perfect life, Jehovah God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *w* 10/1 19, 20a

Tuesday, December 11

Repudiate ungodliness and worldly desires and . . . live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things.—Titus 2:12.

As witnesses of Jehovah, we may acknowledge that we should not be overly absorbed in worldly affairs. We may realize that God's undeserved kindness "teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions." (Titus 2:11, 12, *New International Version*) But what if our heart does not really react that way? Or suppose we desire to strengthen our determination to reject worldly desires. What can help us? One way to succeed in rejecting worldly desires is to make earnest and regular petitions for help from the "Hearer of prayer." (Ps. 65:2) But how might we pray if our heart yearns somewhat for worldly things? As God's witnesses, we should 'let our petitions be made known to God in everything.' If we do so in faith, "the peace of God" will guard our mind and heart and we will be helped to heed the apostle's admonition.—Phil. 4: 6, 7. *w* 10/15 3-5b

Wednesday, December 12

Why have the nations been in tumult?—Ps. 2:1.

Knowing that his time is short, Satan has brought the nations into "tumult." (Rev. 12: 7-12) However, will Jehovah permit those nations to raise "tumult" indefinitely in flagrant opposition to his Kingdom by his Son? Remember, it was charged against first-century Christians that they 'filled Jerusalem with their teaching'; and after that vigorous campaign of public house-to-house preaching had sounded

the warning, earthly Jerusalem met up with Jehovah's execution of judgment. (Acts 5: 28, 41, 42; 4:16) Similarly today, we are proclaiming Jehovah's day of vengeance throughout the realm of Christendom. Our hopes are anchored in God's promises and so we look confidently to the triumph of his "eternal purpose." (Eph. 3: 10-12; Rev. 11:18) Through the Kingdom by Messiah, who now rules out of the heavenly Jerusalem, our grand King, Jehovah, will cause his Sovereign Name to be vindicated, demonstrating that he is our God forever. *w* 3/15 16-18

Thursday, December 13

We are not the sort that shrink back . . . but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul.—Heb. 10:39.

Even though many of the Hebrew Christians had experienced persecution, they had to work at not being "the sort that shrink back." So there is the danger that a Christian might develop a fear of opposition, causing him to "shrink back" or compromise. How about us? We may have had a limited amount of opposition, such as from schoolmates or fellow workers. Even physical abuse, as from an unbelieving mate or parent, has come to some. Yet in many lands it is rather unusual for a Witness to be severely persecuted because of his faith. This can make him less prepared for intense persecution and more liable to "shrink back" when it comes. Let us ask, 'Might I, after having lived a comfortable life, be tempted to shrink back if I were seriously threatened, such as with the loss of my home, employment or access to my family, or with imprisonment and physical abuse?' *w* 2/15 6, 7a

Friday, December 14

The works of the flesh are manifest, and they are . . . divisions, sects.—Gal. 5:19, 20.

Thus under inspiration Paul listed "divisions" and "sects" among "the works of the flesh." Since those who cause such "will not inherit God's kingdom," they cannot be tolerated within the true Christian congregation. (Gal. 5:21) That is why Paul wrote as he did at Titus 3:9-11. Unquestionably, true Christianity cannot be divided into denominations and sects. There cannot even be coexistent tendencies or schools of thought within the Christian congregation, even as Paul notes at 1 Corinthians 1:10. This does not mean that the true Christian witness of Jehovah cannot use his thinking ability, but he must use it in a humble way, even as Paul noted at Ephesians 4:1-6. Those who have been misled from the truth need to be helped "with mildness," in the hope that "they may come back to their proper senses out from the snare of the Devil."—2 Tim. 2:23-26. *w* 9/15 13-17a

Saturday, December 15

They are rendering [God] sacred service day and night in his temple.—Rev. 7:15.

This "day and night" service of the remnant and of their companions of the "great crowd" moves forward apace! Such whole-souled service has always been the concern of faithful traveling overseers and their wives, missionaries, regular and special pioneers and Bethel workers. In recent times thousands of zealous Witnesses, young and old, have made sacrifices in order to share in auxiliary pioneer service for a month or more, spending an average of at least two hours wit-

nessing each day. During 1983 this worldwide activity reached an all-time peak, with a grand total of 360,549 pioneers joyfully reporting service—ably supported by 2,500,000 and more other loyal Kingdom witnesses. Truly, Jehovah has been "creating Jerusalem a cause for joyfulness and her people a cause for exultation"—an exultation also that overflows each year at the season of celebrating the Memorial commanded by the Lord Jesus.—Isa. 65:18. *w* 3/15 16, 17a

Sunday, December 16

Not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you.—Josh. 23:14.

Can we really believe all of God's promises? Yes, we can. We can feel as God-fearing Joshua did when he said these words. Really, we can stake our life on God's promises because what he says is the truth and will, without fail, come to pass. (Isa. 46:9-11) God's Word clearly shows that there is truth, what it is, where it is and who has it. The question for each one of us is this: Do we really want the truth? Not all people want the truth, for Jesus said that the road to eternal life is narrow and relatively few are on it. (Matt. 7:13, 14) The vast majority of mankind today have no use for God, even as noted at Job 21:14-16. Their way of thinking is not based on the truth but is based on Satan's lie that humans would be better off independent from God. To help persons who sincerely want the truth, Jehovah uses his faithful servants on earth to preach the good news of his Kingdom. Are you having a goodly share therein? *w* 4/15 14-16a

Monday, December 17

Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that, when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places.
—Luke 16:9.

Those using the world to such an extent that they make material pursuits their prime concern are in danger of becoming involved in dishonest practices and of losing their faith because of neglecting spiritual matters. Jesus appropriately said the above. So while we need some material things and we can use such resources to advance Kingdom interests and make heavenly Friends of Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, the worldly goal of acquiring these things in abundance should not be allowed to corrupt our heart. (Luke 12:34) The same is true of the worldly goal of achieving position, fame and glory. But people seeking their own glory are like those who eat too much honey, causing nausea: "The eating of too much honey is not good; and for people to search out their own glory, is it glory?"—Prov. 25:27. *w* 10/15 17-19a

Tuesday, December 18

You must prove yourselves holy, because I am holy.
—Lev. 11:45.

Although physical cleanness is important to most people, spiritual cleanness is even more important. In the first place, spiritual uncleanness offends Jehovah God. It is an insult to his awesome majesty, a rebellion against his righteous standards. In essence, it constitutes disloyalty to him as a Person. Spiritual uncleanness, whether doctrinal or moral, is divisive and corrupting. It causes

confusion and results in death. No wonder Jehovah God is so strongly opposed to it! That is why he commanded his ancient people, the Israelites, as above. That, too, is why God demanded spiritual cleanness of his liberated people who were going from Babylon to Jerusalem, carrying along utensils for use in his worship. In words of prophetic import also to Jehovah's Witnesses today, God declared: "Get out from the midst of her, keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah."—Isa. 52:11. *w* 5/1 3b

Wednesday, December 19

Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him.
—Jude 14, 15.

The Bible describes an earlier time than ours in history, when "the earth became filled with violence." (Gen. 6:11) That was more than 4,300 years ago, after the world of that time had got off to a bad start with the disobedience of Adam and Eve followed by their expulsion from the Paradise of Eden. In due course their first son, Cain, murdered his brother Abel. Following Cain's murder of Abel, that original world moved on from bad to worse, even as noted from Jude's words above. God transferred Enoch out of that world, so that he no longer had to put up with the violence and abuse of those wicked people. How rewarding to him will be his resurrection into the peaceful new earth of Jehovah's creation! *w* 7/15 5, 6

Thursday, December 20

Now I exhort you, brothers, to keep your eye on those who cause divisions and occasions for stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and avoid them.

—Rom. 16:17.

It would be displaying a lack of good judgment to dispute publicly with those trying to cause division. Do not let opposers disturb you. Their conduct will neither harm the truth nor stop Jehovah from accomplishing what his Word says he will do. How comforting, therefore, are the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn." (Isa. 54:17) Paul told Timothy about Jannes and Jambres, who resisted Moses, and he said that their madness became plain to all men. These, then, who cause division and seek to make turmoil are in a very perilous position before Jehovah. Our position toward opposers is clearly and distinctly marked out for us in God's Word. *w 3/1 18-20a*

Friday, December 21

Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth?

—Job 38:4.

Jehovah once posed some questions that can help us to compare his knowledge, abilities and standards to those of man, as when he asked the above question of Job. Scientists can offer only *estimates* of the age of the universe. Obviously, humans were not around to know when God created the earth or how. "Was it," God inquired, "from your days onward that you commanded the morning? Did you

cause the dawn to know its place?" Physicists study the earth's rotation, try to imitate the fusion by which our sun produces life-sustaining energy and try to explain the nature of something as common as light. How do their achievements compare with God's? Jehovah continued: "Have you come to know the statutes of the heavens? . . . Can you send forth lightnings?" Finally Job admitted: "I have come to know that you are able to do all things." (Job 38:12, 33-35; 42:2) Do we personally feel the same way? *w 6/15 6*

Saturday, December 22

Those who had been scattered went through the land declaring the good news of the word.

—Acts 8:4.

Because Jehovah's faithful witnesses are directed and helped mightily by their incomparable, all-powerful God, Satan the Devil and his persecuting dupes will never be able to prevail against these genuine Christians. Time and again the Devil has been foiled in his attempts to crush Jehovah's people through persecution. In fact, persecution often has boomeranged on the Archenemy of Jehovah and His people, and the divine will has prevailed. In proof of this, consider the great persecution that arose against the congregation in Jerusalem immediately after Stephen's martyrdom. Those persecuted "went through the land declaring the good news" and their efforts were blessed. For instance, there was spiritual prosperity in Samaria. (Acts 8: 5-8) Other scattered disciples preached elsewhere and, as a result, a great number became believers. That was just the opposite of what was desired by the Devil. *w 5/1 14, 15a*

Sunday, December 23

This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.—Matt. 24:14.

In the face of those four horsemen as depicted at Revelation 6:1-8, what should the disciples of the rider on the white horse do here on earth during this conclusion of the system of things? They should serve unitedly as his mouthpieces in fulfilling an outstanding feature of the sign of his presence, namely, the above. This earth-wide witness must be delivered by his preachers and completed before the terminal end of this doomed system of things is reached. It now being 70 years since the crowned rider on the white horse began his ride to complete his conquest over the opposers of his Kingdom, and since the world conditions meanwhile have worsened to the stage that they have, that terminal end must be close at hand. The short period of time that has been allowed for Satan the Devil here at the earth is about up, apparently. *w 5/15 13a*

Monday, December 24

I have come down from heaven to do, not my will, but the will of him that sent me.

—John 6:38.

God's Word tells us of Jesus' prehuman existence. He existed before Abraham did, he was with his heavenly Father "before the world was," he was "the firstborn of all creation" and by him "all other things were created." (John 17:5; 8:58; Col. 1:15-17) Jesus "humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake. For this very reason also God exalted him to a su-

perior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name." (Phil. 2:8, 9) Yet Jesus repeatedly showed not equality but submission to the Father. He said he was sent by his Father, instructed by his Father, commanded what to say by his Father. (John 3:17; 5:36; 12:49, 50) Jesus said that he "finished the work" his Father gave him to do, and that his followers "have come to know that you [the Father] sent me forth." (John 17:4, 6, 18, 25) He also said: "The Father is greater than I am."—John 14:28. *w 12/1 5, 6, 8a*

Tuesday, December 25

It is the sound of other singing that I am hearing.—Ex. 32:18.

Even without hearing the words, we can often tell what kind of spirit certain songs are designed to produce. From a distance, Moses could discern that music emanating from the Israelite camp was not 'the singing over a mighty performance or the singing of defeat.' When he finally came to the camp and saw how the people were acting, he knew that the music had been of the kind that led to unrestrained idolatrous conduct. So we today need to examine the kind of mood, or spirit, that the music we listen to is producing. Does it uplift us, or is it music that debases? Paul realized that Satan desires to debase or corrupt Jehovah's people. Hence, Paul urged fellow believers to separate themselves from the unrighteous. (2 Cor. 6:14-17) Today, the Devil has cunningly been using various forms of unrighteousness in music to turn people away from God. Therefore we need to be alert to these dangers. *w 10/15 5, 6*

Wednesday, December 26

The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life.

—Rev. 7:17.

The "great crowd" of "other sheep" have come into a spiritual paradise. How? It is by dedicating their lives to Jehovah, conforming to his requirements and associating with the anointed remnant who have been brought into the spiritual paradise from 1919 onward. There they are being prepared and equipped for life in the earthly Paradise that will follow the tribulation at Armageddon. As far as this earth is concerned, Paradise restored to it will remain forever, to God's glory. King David prophesied of it, saying: "But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." Yes, said Jesus: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth." (Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5) In that earthly Paradise all will enjoy blessings like those described by God's prophets. *w 11/15 17-19a*

Thursday, December 27

He will actually swallow up death forever.—Isa. 25:8.

With uplifting Kingdom conditions, and with people having genuine love of neighbor, the subjects of the Kingdom will accomplish things a thousand times more wonderful than anything this world has ever seen. (Isa. 35:2, 6, 7, 10) Yet, it would be distressing to have all of that and then lose it because of getting sick, growing old and dying. But what doctors and scientists cannot now do, God will do under Kingdom rule.

God created man's body, mind and emotions. He knows what will make him well, perfect. When on earth Jesus demonstrated the healing power that he has been given by God and will use in the New Order. (Matt. 15:30, 31) In addition, with mankind being raised to human perfection under Kingdom rule, the above prophecy will be fulfilled. Jehovah's love will extend, too, even to those long dead, for they will get the opportunity to live in God's New Order by being brought back to life in the resurrection. *w 4/15 11, 12a*

Friday, December 28

The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice.
—Deut. 32:4.

At the very start of human existence, the Creator gave the earth to humankind as their eternal home. Then it was indeed a 'good earth.' The Bible's account of creation tells us that, after the Creator had prepared earthly conditions for the first man and woman and placed them upon the earth, "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good." (Gen. 1:31) If it had not appeared very good to the Creator, he would never have placed his human children here in the first place. The very writer of the creation account says of God the Creator the above. As a good Father, he loved mankind at the start. He still loves mankind. Happily God's creating of earth and of man upon it is not to be a vain project. Sadly, after more than 6,000 years, mankind has failed to do what it was authorized to do at Genesis 1:28, but God's original purpose respecting the earth will be fulfilled. —Isa. 55:11. *w 10/1 5-7*

Saturday, December 29

You must speak to them and say to them, "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said," regardless of whether they hear or they refrain.
—Ezek. 3:11.

As the day of God's vengeance comes on apace, it calls for courage on the part of Jehovah's Witnesses to point to "dirges and moaning and wailing" in the near future for human society. (Ezek. 2:9, 10; Isa. 61:1, 2) Relief-seeking people of this threatened world are not disposed to listen to such information at the mouths of Jehovah's Witnesses. But since God sends them forth to spread his Word, they can be certain that he will back them up to the very day of his vengeance. It is not pleasant to have people refuse to listen, even as God noted to Ezekiel. (Ezek. 3:7-11) A forbidding situation like that was what faced the remnant of those Christians who make up the 20th-century Ezekiel class. So, like him, they have not shrunk back because of the forbidding countenances of Christendom's clergy class, and neither have their "other sheep" companions! *w 12/15 6-8a*

Sunday, December 30

Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment.
—Prov. 2:6.

Jehovah's name appears 749 times in the complete Bible book of Psalms. The psalms, or songs of praise, were sung by joyful worshippers who gave "thanks to the name of Jehovah" at the temple in Jerusalem. (Ps. 122:1-4) The writers and singers of the psalms knew Jehovah's name (Ps. 9:10), trusted in his name (33:21), called on his name (80:18; 105:1),

gave thanks to his holy name (106:47), sought help in his name (124:8) and continually praised his name (68:4; 135:3). His was not a hidden name but a beloved name. (Ps. 89:1; 92:1-5) Not only did Jehovah perform the loving acts praised in the Psalms but he inspired the wisdom recorded in the book of Proverbs, even as noted above. God's name should remind us of the entire ensemble of history, prophecy, laws and wisdom that are outlined in the Bible. It should also remind us of the Bible's astounding prophecies. *w 12/1 14, 15*

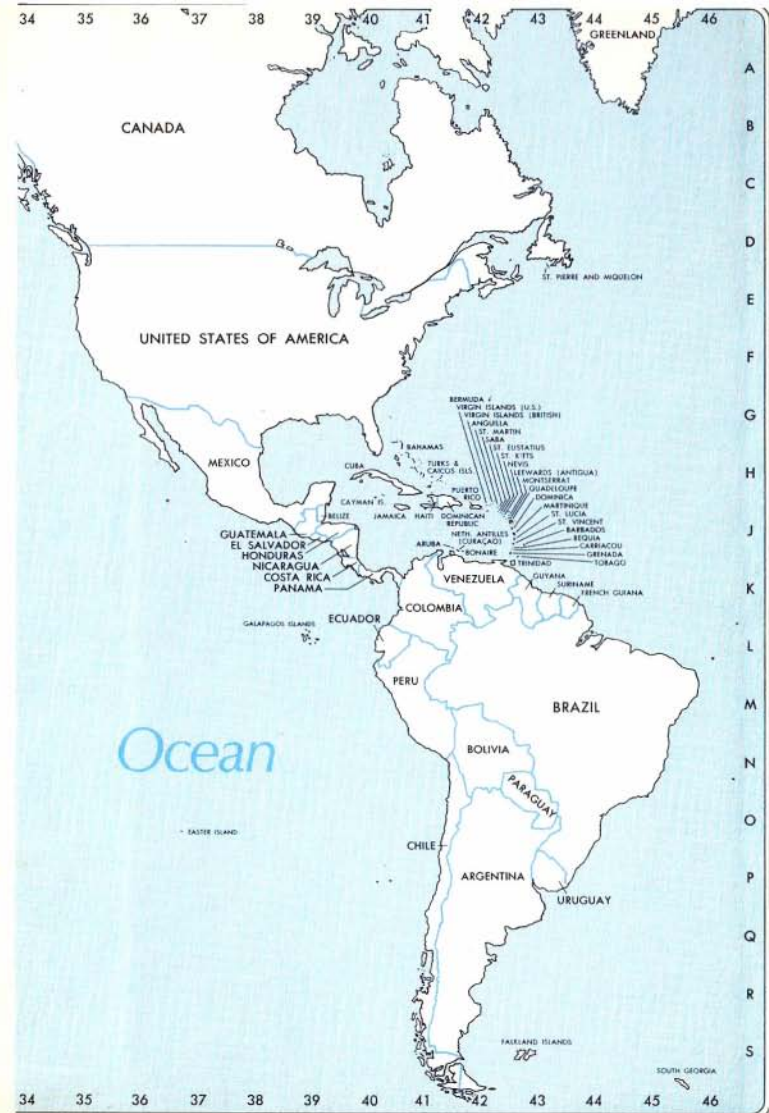
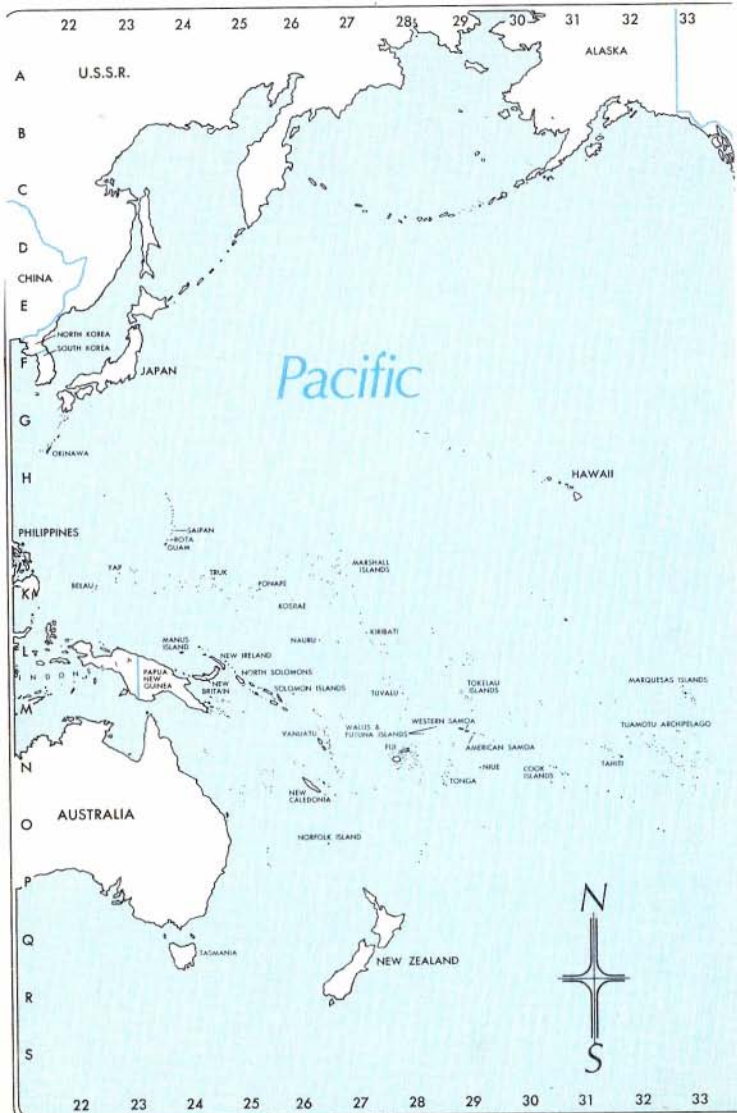
Monday, December 31

Do not be grieving God's holy spirit.—Eph. 4:30.

Curiosity may cause us to begin to feed our mind and heart on immoral, worldly thoughts implanted therein by worldly literature and forms of entertainment. God's Word urges us to be "babes as to badness," not seeking knowledge of wicked things. (1 Cor. 14:20) But curiosity could draw us into a vortex of corruption, and we may unwisely conclude that we are mature or strong enough spiritually to withstand defilement. Then arrogance may develop so that we want no one—ultimately not even God—to 'tell us what to do.' The consequences can be disastrous, since no one can defy God by stubbornly rejecting his counsel and "come off uninjured." (Job 9:1-4) If left unchecked, worldly desires can cause us to grieve God's holy spirit by disregarding it, taking a course contrary to its leading and setting our heart on objectives other than those toward which the spirit would impel us. This can result in unforgivable sin.—Matt. 12:31, 32. *w 10/15 9, 10b*

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